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SMITH AND ROBINSON! Well, we now nominate Jesse Jones of Texas for National Democratic Chairman and Brown of California—there must be a Brown in California—as National Treasurer, and then the Democrats will sweep the country. "We the plain people of America in convention assembled. . . ." Down with the plutocrats, down with snobbery in names. There are Smiths, Browns, Joneses, and Robinsons enough to hold the balance of power in any State. Who says this is not an ideal team? Here is Smith, Catholic, Wet, and Tammany, linked in a trial marriage to Robinson, Protestant, Dry, and anti-Negro. The North and the South being thus joined together—hands across the Mississippi—let no man put them asunder, least of all an outlander from the Pacific Coast. All the Drys can happily vote for Robinson, all the Wets for Smith. All the believers in democracy can vote for Smith; all who believe that Americans are not created free and equal if the shades of their skins are darker can vote for Robinson. Tweedledum, Tweedledee; Tweedledee, Tweedledum. Smith, Robinson, Jones, Brown. Both ends against the middle; the middle against both ends. Long live the American republic!

JOSEPH TAYLOR ROBINSON, senior Senator from Arkansas, and now Democratic candidate for Vice-President, has been in political life since 1903. After ten years in the lower house of Congress he was elected Governor of Arkansas only to be elected to the United States Senate thirteen days after he became Governor. He was reelected to the Senate in 1918 and 1924. During the last three Congresses he has been the minority leader of the Senate. As such he has shown some ability, but no approach to statesmanship. He espoused eagerly the doctrines of Woodrow Wilson after the war and has been known as one of the ardent champions of the League of Nations. It cannot, however, be said of him that his has been an aggressive personality, or that he is endowed with originality or inspired by any very potent demand for reform. The Democratic minority in the Senate has shown itself during the period of his leadership infinitely inferior to the group of Progressives in the Republican Party. For this Mr. Robinson must largely bear the responsibility. In other words, he is a typical Southern politician put on the ticket for the purpose of catching some guileless Drys.

CLAUDE BOWERS is an interesting phenomenon. A journalistic adventurer come out of the West and finding a lodging place on the *Evening World*—why he should be buried there we have never been able to understand—he promptly did a fine book on Hamilton and Jefferson and last winter made a speech at the Jackson Day banquet of the Democracy, with the result that the good old Democrats there nearly passed away with amazement. They actually found themselves listening to a man who had read some books and had an idea or two, who believed that the party had a background and ought to live up to it. When they recovered from the shock the banqueteers nominated him for keynoter at the Democratic Convention. It was a good old-fashioned keynote that he gave the country. There were snappy, sonorous, and ringing phrases in it, and enough references to Jefferson, Jackson, and Hamilton to make old-timers take notice. There was enough lambasting of the Republican corruptionists to satisfy even the editors of *The Nation.* The radio audience enjoyed it immensely, for it was good old-fashioned spellbinding, and it was true. But not even Mr. Bowers's sense of justice and impartiality could survive the heat at Houston. He glossed over the sins of the Democrats with the intrepidity of a circus acrobat. None the less, the attack went home. The proof of this is that the solemn, hide-bound Republican organs have dwelt pityingly upon his "raking over long-forgotten six-year-old scandals," and have pointed out how impossible it is for Al Smith to go on with that sort of thing. They cite the very Democratic newspapers which apologized for Doheny and Sinclair, and threw mud at Walsh and Wheeler, to show that Claude Bowers was quite out of order. All of which merely proves that Mr. Bowers did a valuable job at Houston.

NOBODY OF THIS GENERATION will see the end of the World War. But its unreason and its partisanship, its sentimentality and its myths have already been reduced so measurably that one must regret any incident which fans old fires. The rebuilding of the Louvain Library through funds raised in this country was an act of inter-

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national good-will, but that purpose will be more than negatived if the inscription which it is to bear is the cause of reviving and perpetuating all the old excesses and absurdities of the war years. Whitney Warren, the American architect who has planned the restoration of the library, wants to adorn it with a Latin inscription which in English means: "Destroyed by German fury; restored by American generosity." The words were approved by Cardinal Mercier before his death, Mr. Warren says, and he insists that they be accepted as part of the restoration plan. The head of the university to which the library belongs has refused to allow the inscription to be put up, Mr. Warren has threatened to resort to the courts, and the press and public of Belgium have begun to fight the war over again. On top of this a telegram is made public from Herbert Hoover to the head of the university. Speaking for the Commission for Relief in Belgium Educational Foundation, the chief donor of the rebuilding fund, Mr. Hoover says that the university is in entire control of the new building and counsels that the controversy be settled so as to "eliminate war bitterness" and "be in accord with mature public opinion."

MR. HOOVER'S TELEGRAM, sent a month ago, is unimpeachable in its wisdom and no doubt reflects public sentiment in this country, although its intrusion at this time may be resented by some Belgians as American meddling. What an unhappy quarrel it all is and how reminiscent of the woman who had her husband haled into court on a charge that he had struck her over the head with a framed motto reading "God Bless Our Home." Mr. Warren's contention that as the architect of the restored library he is entitled to put on an inscription of his choosing and "even after the completion of the building I have the right to insist that the structure shall be maintained as I built it" is so absurd that it needs only to be stated to be laughed out of court. Mr. Warren belongs to a generation which was too old to fight and is more bitter and obstinate than those which did; he is one of those Americans abroad who are more anti-German than the Allies themselves. He would do well to harp less on what Cardinal Mercier approved just after the war and to reflect more on what he might advocate today. Nor is the truth or falsity of the inscription of any consequence. The aim should be to make the restored library what its donors intended, a contribution toward international good-will rather than international controversy. To this end it would seem best now not to have any inscription whatever, especially as the proposed legend is objectionable not only as perpetuating war hatred but as an unduly bombastic insistence upon American virtue. If an approximation of the truth were to be set forth for future consumption we might suggest: "Destroyed by human madness induced by the folly of nationalism and war; restored out of the easily earned, easily given surplus of citizens of a country to which, by lucky accident, the European catastrophe brought unbounded material prosperity instead of irreparable havoc."

ROSIKA SCHWIMMER has won a triple victory. She has obtained a verdict of $17,000 for libel against Fred R. Marvin and the New York *Commercial*, a daily newspaper now extinct, and the United States Circuit Court of Appeals in Chicago has reversed Judge George A. Carpenter and soundly trounced him for denying citizenship to Miss Schwimmer. The Circuit Court of Appeals pointed out that the rights of a petitioner for citizenship "are not to be determined by putting conundrums to her." Judge Carpenter had asked her what attitude she would take if an enemy soldier were about to kill an American soldier, and as her answer did not please his mightiness he denied her citizenship—with especial eagerness because she declared herself a non-resistant. For going after Fred R. Marvin and the New York *Commercial* Miss Schwimmer deserves the thanks of the public. Marvin has been a pest in that he has continually made unfounded and unwarranted attacks upon liberals. He usually so phrased his charges, however, as to make it difficult for those misrepresented to sue.

THE CHICAGO *TRIBUNE* is entitled to the congratulations of all honest men, and especially of those of the citizens of Chicago who are not engaged in politics, machine-gun shooting, or operating vice and gambling rings for its service in compelling Mayor "Bill" Thompson and some of his political associates to disgorge $1,732,272.79. It was a simple game that the 100 per cent American patriot and his gang worked—patriotism and rascality still can go hand in hand. In an expenditure of $28,000,000 for public improvements experts were employed by the city to value the land taken for new streets and to estimate damages due to the improvement. Enormous fees, paid to these experts on the excuse that their services were worth so much, were discovered to have been shared by the Mayor and his friends. The scheme was very much like the organization of the Continental Trading Company and its paying off of the Republican campaign deficit to the satisfaction of the honorable Will Hays. Says the court:

> The Thompson group, in its quest for control of the city, county, and State offices, required vast sums to maintain its organization, and for campaign purposes. To meet these expenses . . . the plan was conceived and carried out through which nearly $3,000,000, constituting trust funds of the city, was paid to five experts who contributed a large portion of their fees to help defray these political obligations. More than $2,500,000 was paid to real-estate and building experts illegally. . . . Thompson and Harding [County Treasurer], by their answers, deny the charges of conspiracy, but no evidence was offered to support their denials.

The *Tribune* sued as a taxpayer and did a first-class civic deed.

HONEST JOURNALISM and honest pedagogy are apparently unwanted at Ohio University, Athens, Ohio. At any rate that seems to be the conclusion from the American Civil Liberties Union's report on the dismissal of Wesley H. Maurer, professor of journalism at the university. Professor Maurer also acted as editor of the Athens *Messenger*, a local newspaper, which he used as a journalistic laboratory for his students. During the past year, it appears, he endeavored to treat the coal strike of that community impartially in his newspaper and thereby aroused the opposition of certain business interests. Again, at a meeting of a local civic association he asked whether that organization favored or opposed organized labor. The result was that a committee was sent to the *Messenger* demanding his discharge and shortly thereafter he was informed by President E. B. Bryan of the university that he

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would not be reappointed, despite the fact, he says, that he had been assured of a position for six years when he left the University of Michigan for this post in 1925.

WE HAVE SEEN NO WORDS of praise for a truly remarkable achievement of the members in the New York City engineering department: their organization into a successful labor union, a union of "white-collar" workers. Surely that is no mean accomplishment. Since its organization two years ago, the Union of Technical Men has grown to approximately 1,600 members and has recently won its first fight for salary increases for the engineers and technical men employed by the city. Minimum salaries in the various classes have been increased from $1,260 to $2,160; from $2,160 to $3,120; and from $2,760 to $4,260. There are still certain grievances to be settled as to the distribution of future pay increases, but the engineers are facing them with greater confidence and more optimism than ever before in their independent, highly praised, but lowly paid lives. The *Technical Outlook*, a monthly paper issued by the Union of Technical Men, declares: "A strong union is the only guarantee of permanent gain and we feel that the technical men have learned that lesson by this time." If so, that is a real tribute to engineering intelligence.

ADVOCATES OF CAPITAL PUNISHMENT may profitably study the strange case of James Sweeney, a "lifer" in the New Jersey State prison. He was positively identified by two eye-witnesses as wielding a pistol in a sensational mail-truck robbery in Elizabeth, New Jersey, by a gang of seven men who killed the driver of the truck and wounded two others. Accordingly he was convicted of murder in the first degree. It was only the jury's recommendation for mercy that saved him from the electric chair. Now, however, it appears that it was all a mistake and that Sweeney is innocent of the crime—as well as two others who had also been positively identified by eye-witnesses from Rogues' Gallery photographs. Of two other men charged with the murder, one was released only last month after having been held in jail eleven months awaiting trial. Sweeney is to be detained in the State prison for two months—a seemingly unnecessary delay—because his application for pardon was not properly drawn.

ISABEL HAPGOOD, dead at seventy-eight, was valuable not only as a translator, in which capacity she was best known, but as journalist and critic. Her translations from the Italian, the Spanish, and the French and from the Russian of Tolstoi, Gogol, Gorki, and Turgenev were carefully and skilfully done, and distinctly enriched our literature. One of the first to insist upon fidelity to the original Russian of Tolstoi and the rest, she set a new standard for translation at a time when Russian books were stealing to us through the French; and this high standard she pressed upon others, too, so that there was no severer critic of a bad version than she. But as an historian and critic of literature, and not the least as the author of a work on the Russian popular epic, she was equally valuable. For twenty-two years she was foreign correspondent, reviewer, and editorial writer for the New York *Evening Post* and *The Nation*, where she performed less conspicuous but no less useful service as a connecting link between the literatures of America and Europe.

# "What Do You Call It?"

IT is difficult to define the countryman, and possibly no pure representative of the species exists. Yet the country has its character—a character that one coming from the city immediately feels or sees or somehow knows—and so must the countryman have his. And yet what is it? It is not, as novelists frequently imagine, a slowness of speech, a drawl; many farmers, or at any rate farmers' wives, could outbabble the warmest-tongued landlady of the town that lies over the hills, and in every outlying community there is a mouthy man. It is not, either, an envious curiosity as to what is going on in the city; or a partiality to open skies and reflective sunsets; or an aptitude for breaking into "By hecks" and "Gol darns"; or an earthy philosophy; or a thickness (or a quickness) of wit; or a ruggedness of temper. All these things are found here and there, and occur regularly in fiction, yet are far from universal and therefore characteristic. Is there any habit or quality which always distinguishes the dweller between towns?

Probably not, though we have one to propose. It is the fear of new words. In our experience there is nothing so predicable in a farmer as a tendency to shy away from language he is unused to handling. He will let you use a technical term, but he will be glad that it is you who have to use it, and though he knows perfectly well what it means, and knows indeed that there is no substitute for it in conversation, he himself will get around it somehow. "The mare was mighty sick," he will say, "but I got the vet out here and he gave her some of that—what do you call it?—and she was up in no time." Or: "They say a post will last half again as long in the ground if you paint it with—what do you call it?" He means creosote, but no power on earth would move him to speak the syllables. They do not sound to him like real syllables; it is a word foreign to his brain and mouth, a word bristling with connotations of the stranger with horn-rimmed spectacles, the reader, the specialist. He likes better, and indeed likes only, the short words he grew up with, words that stand for things, not abstract laboratory combinations of things. His language in short is English, not Greek.

Now there are countrymen who do not fit this description. But investigation will prove, we suspect, that they have had contact with the city through their children, their papers, their radios, or their books. They have been contaminated by science; they like to know the newest word for the newest thing, and they employ it as naturally almost as do their cousins from the streets. The distinction is not between the rustic and the urban as such, but between two traditions which have never joined. The countryman of whom we were speaking is the conservative in the case; he stays in his valley and nurses the language in its primitive and homely form, drawing its days out until they become centuries of years, tending it and protecting it each season as he would the seed without which no crop could be perpetual. As such we like him—as also we like the brisk townsman who is not ashamed to pronounce a polysyllable and accept a category. If the countryman keeps language alive, the townsman makes it grow; he grafts it, transplants it, and perfects varieties. As in all things else, it takes two people to make a world.

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# Governor Smith the Nominee

GOVERNOR SMITH'S capture of the Democratic nomination represents a remarkable achievement in American politics—let no man mistake that! Defeated four years ago, he has had a walkover in 1928 despite all the prejudice against him because of his religion, his "Wetness," his affiliations with Tammany Hall. Nor is this to be wholly explained by the fact that, as in the case of Herbert Hoover, there was no one outstanding figure upon whom all those in opposition to Governor Smith could agree. Everyone knows that the Governor's hold upon the country has grown by leaps and bounds since 1924. He bulks far larger in the national life, he holds a much more impressive place in the regard and the affections of the American people. Yet during those years he has not once swung around the political circle, nor in any way campaigned on his own behalf. More than that, he has during the last twelve months more and more retired within himself. He has granted no inspired interviews; he has made no noteworthy speeches; he has even refused to let his stand on great national issues or foreign questions be known. He has declined to strengthen his hold upon the country by going before Chautauquas or taking to the lecture platform, or by engaging in any theatrical performance whatsoever. He has stayed in Albany and busied himself with his job. He has been more than ever Governor of the State of New York.

These have, in the main, been wise tactics—though, as our readers are aware, we have resented his complete silence upon vital issues in regard to which the people were entitled to know where he stood, even in advance of the nomination. It is a bad precedent which he and his rival, Mr. Hoover, have established by muzzling themselves on these issues; it is an unworthy break with a fine American tradition. Nevertheless, the people of the United States have seen that Governor Smith stuck to his desk; that, much as he desired the Presidency, he would neither essay the role of universal preacher after the manner of Roosevelt, nor neglect his work to further his ambition. He has let the nomination come to him, and it has come—by the logic of events, by the absence of a sharply challenging rival, without the expenditure of a large sum of money. He has earned it by his devotion to the people of the State of New York, by the extraordinary ability, enthusiasm, honesty, and devotion he has displayed as Governor, and by his reputation for progressiveness and for profound devotion to the plain people. The party looked upon this man in the Executive Chamber at Albany and decided that he should lead.

It is in many respects a heartening spectacle. For one thing, the convention was far more united than had been thought possible. The speaking—especially the nominating address of Franklin D. Roosevelt—was on a far higher level of ability, sincerity, and honesty than that in Kansas City. The platform, despite various silences and inconsistencies, and the shameful compromise on the liquor issue, is in the main in accord with Democratic tradition. It gravely weakens the party's position on the tariff when it links tariff reform with the question of high wages. It righteously denounces Republican imperialism in the Caribbean and pledges its honor not to intervene in the private affairs of other nations, conveniently forgetting that it was that peerless Democrat and savior of democracy, Woodrow Wilson, who invaded the Republic of Haiti and tore down the government of that country; who used the big guns of the battleships at Vera Cruz to kill men, women, and children in one of the most needless crimes of the century. If it meant what it said the platform would not be bad, as party platforms go. Again, if there were plenty of power-trust delegates for Smith, the all-controlling influence of wealth and Big Business was by no means as pervading as at the Kansas City convention. The bosses were at least far less in evidence.

When this is said, the fact remains that it is the same old Democratic Party with which we have to deal—the Democratic Party of glaring inconsistencies, of hateful compromises, made up of hopelessly divergent elements which, should it win the Presidency, would hamstring it as frequently and as fatally as it was hamstrung during the Wilson Administration. It is the party of the Wets in our large cities and of the reactionary South, which bleats at conventions about the democracy of Thomas Jefferson and then makes a mockery of every one of its pretensions by denying fundamental American rights, guaranteed by the Constitution, to Americans whose skins happen to be dark. It has just hypocritically assailed the Republican Party for its failure to enforce the Volstead law and the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution, while the violation of two other amendments to the Constitution is its stock-in-trade in the Southern States. With similar hypocrisy, it takes part in the refusal of the Congress to obey the solemn mandate of the Constitution to reapportion regularly the Congressional districts. It pretends to defend the rights of the farmer, but, aside from a very limited measure of tariff reform, has nothing to offer to him except the same glittering generalities that came out of Kansas City. It is the same old Democracy, no more changed by the nomination of Alfred E. Smith than Tammany Hall has been changed by Alfred E. Smith and Judge Olvany. It has chosen a man who has come from the plain people, who has a genuine enthusiasm for ameliorating their lot, who has made an extraordinary record in this connection while Governor. Yet the fact remains, as we have so frequently pointed out, that he is a candidate of whom the great capitalists are not in the least afraid. No tremor went through Wall Street when he was nominated; there was no break in prices, as there would have been had a really great Progressive been chosen to lead the Democratic hosts.

Much, of course, now depends upon Governor Smith. His refusal to accept the platform's prohibition straddle does him great credit. Had he said nothing about it he would have made it clear that his silence of the past winter was merely opportunism. Governor Smith has now brought the Wet and Dry issue to the front, and the country is surely convinced as to his integrity and courage. It is the wisest tactical move that he could possibly have made.

As a sequel to his message to Houston Governor Smith has the opportunity to write his own platform, to make it clear where he stands, and to have it known of all men that he seeks no vote through compromise, or deceit, or conceal-

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ment. The only possible hope of his success lies in dominating the situation through his own personality, through the vigor of his campaign, as contrasted with the weakness put upon the Republican Party by the colorless personality of Mr. Hoover and his inability to appear upon any platform. Governor Smith enters the lists tremendously handicapped by his religion—gravely unjust as this is—by his "Wetness" and his association with Tammany Hall; multitudes will everywhere refuse to "turn the White House over to Tammany Hall." He can overcome these handicaps only by convincing the bulk of his fellow-citizens that he is not only a sincere champion of public righteousness, and of the just needs and demands of the plain people, but that he is as brave and downright and fearless as his career at Albany has made him appear to the bulk of the voters of the Empire State. For him compromise will be disaster, for in it the public will read that he is but "another politician," as ready as Herbert Hoover to discard sincerely cherished beliefs in order to win the office for which he has been nominated.

As for this journal, we shall, of course, be influenced, like everybody else, by the events of the next few months. We are ready to go so far today as to declare that if we had to choose between Hoover and Smith, we should be for Smith as the lesser of two evils. But as we said when Mr. Hoover was nominated, and as we shall continue to say even though our readers may be wearied by its iteration and reiteration, we are just as much opposed to the two old parties as we were in 1920 and 1924. We have not one word to withdraw of the indictments of them which we penned during those two campaigns. It is a false, a bogus fight which is being staged by them for the deception of the American people. Neither of them has mentioned the real enemy. Neither of them has joined battle honestly or seriously with the forces that threaten the freedom and the happiness of the individual American, that menace our very institutions. The tremendous forces of our ever-increasing capitalism, of the monopolies which are hourly reaching out more and more to subordinate the means and resources and opportunities of the American people to their greedy materialistic purposes—these are not now challenged by either Republicans or Democrats. Republicans are frankly the mercenaries of those controllers of capital who, as Woodrow Wilson said in his "New Freedom," are the "masters of America." Nothing that took place at Houston allows of the belief that if Alfred Smith enters the White House his party will assume the attitude of radical progressiveness which marked Woodrow Wilson's attainment of the Presidency.

We still do not know whether any new party is to be hoped for or not. It seems less likely than two weeks ago. Yet the opportunity is there. It requires but a leader to marshal the hosts of dissatisfied Americans who will never, never vote for a man who sat for seven years in the Cabinet of Harding and Coolidge and could not lift his voice on any occasion to denounce the swinish corruption in which that body took part; and will never, never vote for Alfred E. Smith of Tammany Hall, the Wet running on a Dry platform. Finally, we would remind our readers, or such of them as are not frightened by names and by epithets, or by fear of "throwing away" their vote when they ballot according to their consciences and not according to compromises, that there is in the field a high-grade, honorable candidate for the Presidency, Norman Thomas, the nominee of the Socialist Party.

# Let's Follow the Horses!

THE ethical code of the race-course seems to be in advance of that of the lawyers. When Harry Sinclair was indicted in Washington the Maryland race-tracks barred his horses from their courses. Apparently they concluded that a man branded by the United States Supreme Court as "fraudulent and corrupt" was not fit company for jockeys wearing the colors of high-bred horses. After his acquittal by a petty jury, to be sure, the moral race-track men rescinded their exclusion, but the first act was none the less significant. Their standards were not applied elsewhere.

Did President Coolidge lose moral prestige when he dined with Will Hays shortly after that Presbyterian elder had uncomfortably wriggled through his cross-examination before the Senate oil committee? Have any Pittsburgh clubs taken cognizance of Andrew Mellon's reticence as to Republican oil bonds—a story unearthed only by a chance pencil note found with the Pratt papers, and in spite of Mellon's unsocial secretiveness? It ought to help toward real honesty in high office if, in the future, personal friendship and club acquaintanceship were modified by public disservice.

The legal profession even prides itself that it will defend any crook. In Boston the State Attorney General resigned in order to avoid the disgrace of impeachment, but this Arthur Reading, who was such a valiant aid to Messrs. Thayer, Fuller, and Lowell in the Sacco-Vanzetti case, is represented by leaders of the Massachusetts bar. Possibly it is proper for lawyers to have no concern with the conscience of even such a client. But have the Boston clubs and the Massachusetts bar turned a cold shoulder to these attorneys, as was done to William M. Thompson when through thick and thin he fought the case of Sacco and Vanzetti? What is the rule of social conduct that results in such topsy-turvy behavior?

Leading members of the New York bar held for many months the keys to three-quarters of a million dollars of the covert Continental oil bonds. Senator Walsh and the federal government were engaged in a vain search for this loot. These lawyers, so-called "officers of the court," knew of the search, but kept mum. Their obligation to the State seemed secondary to their duty to a rich client.

Again, did Martin W. Littleton and others of Harry Sinclair's counsel know of the jury surveillance in that case? If so, they should have been held equally guilty with Burns; and if not, they might well have dropped the case on the ground that their client Sinclair had not treated them with candor and confidence. As Senator Walsh pointed out, Sinclair must have lied to his counsel about the Continental bonds. The only alternative is to believe that his counsel knowingly lied to the court. But, when Senator Walsh suggested a protest, the only answer was to call him a "meddlesome Matty."

But how does the bar treat such behavior? Are such lawyers dropped from the committees on legal ethics or from membership in the bar associations? Have their clubs heard of the rulings of the racing stables?

At what point should public chicanery create new personal relationships? A few years ago every divorced woman was ostracized. In high society many names are still

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stricken from the social lists because of the style of the boot or the cut of the tuxedo. Times change and standards. Even drunkenness is not the same social disgrace that it used to be when drinking was legal. Should not the leaders of wealth be measured by stricter standards than the poor, and should not those who hold high public or professional office bear the moral responsibilities of their leadership? Is it unreasonable to assert that the ethics of the bar do not approach the ethics of the turf as long as the leaders, riding with crooked horses, are allowed to remain the leaders of the profession? Even hard-boiled business men might learn from the racing stables. Some ethical bankers might come to the conclusion that a Doheny or a Sinclair—pronounced guilty by the Supreme Court—ought to be doubtful risks in other gentlemanly ventures.

Let's follow the horses!

# On With the Dance!

WE gather from our newspapers that the latest novelty in American amusements is the dance marathon. The New York dailies have been carrying accounts of a dance marathon in Atlantic City, one in Pittsburgh (until stopped by the police), and two in their home town—one for white couples in Madison Square Garden, another for Negroes farther uptown. In addition to these events, which have happened to catch our editorial eye, there are doubtless many others elsewhere in the country that have escaped our notice. In a day of varied and curious championships we do not see why the ability to dance down all rivals is not as worthy of honor and profit as most of our other competitions—including that to be the richest man in the United States or even to be its President.

The usual method of conducting these marathons seems to be to allow fifteen minutes of rest at the end of every hour of dancing, and let the contestants fight it out on that line if it takes all summer. Interest in the affair at Madison Square Garden was mild until it had been going on six or eight days and a majority of the original ninety-one couples had fallen asleep and been put out. Then picturesque incidents began to be reported. Of the ninth day of the marathon the New York *Times* wrote:

> Vera Campbell, a girl of powerful build, has for several days been putting new life into her drooping partner, Dave Auerbach, by kicking his feet, ankles, and shins at critical times. Now her own feet are in such condition that they cannot longer be used as revivifiers on her partner, so she has taken to punching him on the chin and the side of the face when she notices him getting into a torpor.
>
> The only girl on the floor who has avoided foot trouble is Hercules Mary Promitis of Pittsburgh. One of her friends told her that the old bare-knuckle prize-fighters used to pickle their hands in brine and vinegar to toughen them for a fight. He believed that what was good for a bare-knuckle fighter's fist would be good for a dance-derbyist's feet. Taking this hint, Hercules pickled her feet in brine and vinegar for three weeks, and vindicated her friend's reasoning.

On the same day it was reported in regard to another couple:

> Helen Schmidt landed several rights on the jaw of her partner, Joseph Tartore, early yesterday morning. They are Couple 16. Tartore's instructions to his partner were to swing on his jaw if he showed signs of grogginess or of trying to quit the derby. The girl loyally did her part and again and again revived the sinking Tartore with sharp rights to the face. . . . In spite of a series of the resuscitating hooks to the jaw, Tartore slipped to the floor yesterday morning at about 4 o'clock. He was pulled to his feet. The girl braced him up temporarily with strong doses of the usual tonic, but he finally became too groggy to move. The sharpest punches did him no good, and the team was eliminated.

But it was not left to the women to practice all the pugilism. For on the tenth day of the marathon we are grieved to read:

> Dominick Laperte of Couple 37 blackened the eye of his partner, Charlotte Kush of Johnstown, Pa., in a quick battle yesterday morning. Dominick had developed a stalling technique of his own. He would lean against the bandstand and support himself while pretending to dance. Fearing that he would be disqualified for this, his partner, after arguing and pleading in vain, stamped on his toes and slapped him. Laperte countered with an accurately driven uppercut to the eye. "You're no gentleman," said Miss Kush. "I suspected it before." . . . She kept him apologizing abjectly all through two rest periods, but finally pardoned him on his promise never to forget again while the derby lasted what was due a lady.

On the same day some of the couples, so it was reported, began to grow light in the head—to see visions if not to dream dreams:

> Mortimer began to complain that large sums of money were stolen from his tent. He saw a legion of pickpockets and sneak-thieves pursuing him. The girl had dispelled previous hallucinations by short punches to the face and neck. At 4:30 p. m., however, he broke away from her and raced out of the arena in pursuit of a pickpocket. Several men restrained him as he sought to attack an attendant. He was disqualified for leaving the arena.

But the experience of Couple 45 was even more tragic. For this is what happened:

> The girl, Olive Goss of 309 East Eighty-ninth Street, after gazing for nearly ten days steadily on the face of Alois Bruhin, began to take exception to it. She tried to push it out of her line of vision. For hours she kept turning it to the right and to the left. Bruhin, a rather nice-looking young man, slowly grew angry at the repeated hints that his face was of the type that sears the eyeballs. The girl grew more vehement. She began to scream with pain every time the countenance recorded itself on her retina. But the girl finally collapsed and the couple were eliminated after covering 206 hours and 25 minutes.

Reading about these stirring incidents roused our editorial curiosity and we decided to have a look. We did. What a cruel disappointment! Nothing exhilarating happened for our benefit. It was as dull as a six-day bicycle race. The couples did not even dance—except occasionally. Mostly they just walked around the floor. And often they stopped to take a drink, to chat with friends among the spectators, to have a facial massage or a shampoo. At such times they merely shifted their weight from one foot to another so as not to be declared out of the contest. Evidently the reporters for the daily newspapers had better luck or better imaginations than we had. How great a debt we owe to the press, which frequently makes the record of life more entertaining than life itself!

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# It Seems to Heywood Broun

WILLIAM E. SWEET, who was once Governor of Colorado, wrote to *The Nation* last week to attack my attitude on prohibition. The article which riled him he scarcely can have read. At any rate he missed the point completely. "Whenever a Methodist conference, a Presbyterian assembly, or the Federal Council of Churches strikes a blow at an unsocial practice or industrial evil," writes Mr. Sweet, "someone says the church is meddling and Mr. Broun does not omit to say so in this instance."

But I said nothing of the kind. Any church, including the Catholic, has a right to a political opinion. My objection to the tactics of the militant Protestant sects is that they try to thwart the will of the people in the matter of prohibition by forcing the issue out of the campaign. Having obtained a Dry plank from the Republicans, the Anti-Saloon League and its allies went to Houston and bulldozed the Democrats into a similar declaration. And after this platform had been adopted Josephus Daniels had some reason to boast that prohibition had been eliminated from the election. And so I repeat that in effect the Dry forces are conducting a filibuster. Prohibition ought to be an issue. Possibly the majority wants no modification but surely the minority has a right to vote on the subject.

Again and again the Drys have said that if the Wets wanted any change in Volsteadism they should make their protest at the polls. Nevertheless, the prohibitionists have done their damndest to make this protest impossible. Every referendum has been opposed by the Drys. There is no evidence that the Protestant whips want to have noses counted. Having secured the legislation which they desire, they seem to feel that there should never again be any balloting on this subject. Governor Sweet is addicted to this particular heresy. Speaking of my article, the former Colorado Governor writes: "He says 'one victory does not give permanent possession.' How many victories will?" And this I hold to be a very curious question from a man supposedly experienced in the practices of a republic. Of course the answer is that a public question can never be settled beyond the chance of reconsideration.

For instance, the League of Nations was a major issue in a national campaign. The foes of the League won a sweeping victory, but does Governor Sweet actually think that there is anything in American practice or provision to prevent the question being opened up all over again? He forgets the very history of the prohibition movement. The issue has long been before the people. Repeatedly the Prohibition Party put up candidates and was defeated, but there was no reason why they should not go on trying. Which they did. And likewise the Wets have every right to say "Let's fight this thing out all over again."

It is true that the prohibitionists have one distinct advantage in their present position. They are now intrenched behind an amendment, and the American Constitution is exceedingly faulty in the fact that an extremely small minority can prevent the repeal of any amendment. The frankest way to deal with this situation would be to call a constitutional convention and have a thoroughgoing revision. The founders of this nation were wise but not beyond human limitations. They could not foresee the vast changes which were bound to occur in the nation with the coming of the years. For instance, the wire-tapping case was an excellent example. This presented a nice point of law. Does listening-in upon a telephone connection constitute a violation of the protection guaranteed the citizen against search and seizure in his home? Some of the justices of the Supreme Court felt that it did while the majority held that the constitutional provision could not be stretched to include a means of communication coming into a house from the outside. But after all we shall never know what the framers would have thought concerning this point. They never knew the telephone.

We have boldly scrapped the Electoral College scheme and in time we may do away with lame-duck sessions devised by a group of men who could not foresee the coming of the railroad. Until such time as the Constitution can be overhauled, nullification is a necessary and time-honored expedient. Whether force bills should be introduced to give the Southern Negro the franchise is a matter open to debate. At the moment it would be impossible to command a majority to contest the right of the Solid South to its nullification. There is no need to argue the precise legal status of the methods employed to override the constitutional provisions. No fair-minded man can possibly deny that the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments have been scrapped in spirit. There is something more sacred than the Constitution. Every law must rest finally on the will of the majority. Checks may be placed to enforce a period of deliberation, but any man who thinks that a minority can permanently have its way by virtue even of a constitutional amendment is asking something more than human nature can endure or should endure. Nullification is among the inalienable rights of man.

In a recent speech in New Jersey I was honored by Senator Heflin who mentioned me among the martyrs. I won't have it. Tom-Tom can be for me but I am not for him. Here is the report from the Newark *Ledger:* "Speaking of the 'free press of America' sneeringly, Senator Heflin cited the discharge of Heywood Broun, New York columnist, and said Broun was 'fired because in one of his articles he said that there wasn't an editor in New York who dared to print an article which would offend the powers of the Catholic church.'"

I like the *World* little better than does the gentleman from Alabama, but he misquotes me first and also misinterprets the incident. I said that editors were timid about offending Catholic readers. Right now I might cite the fact that there was no editorial comment hereabouts against the Pope's criticism of women in athletics. Bishop Manning or Dr. Straton would have been laughed at for the promulgation of the same doctrine. Still, several newspapers took an attitude on Mexico which was not to the liking of their Catholic subscribers. It was my intention in *The Nation* article of which Heflin speaks to point out that newspapers such as the liberal *World* are frightened by many shadows. And to the best of my knowledge and belief I lost my job because I said that the *World* in several issues having nothing to do with Catholicism displayed a lack of courage.

HEYWOOD BROUN

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# The Big Show at Houston

By LEWIS S. GANNETT

*Houston, Texas, June 30*

THE big show is over. Having nominated a Wet Easterner for President and a Dry Westerner for Vice-President, the Democrats are pouring home like schoolboys from a picnic.

Bryan swept the 1896 convention with unscheduled eloquence; the Wilson and Clark forces fought it out from the floor at Baltimore in 1912. But in the vast spaces of Sam Houston Hall it is impossible for an individual on the floor to catch the eye or the ear. Acoustics are sacrificed to ventilation; everything depends upon the loud-speakers, and even a leather-lunged orator of the old school would be a failure unless he had a previous arrangement to be recognized and escorted to the privileged post in front of the microphones. And there he does not need leather lungs. One man at the microphone is a whole convention in this radio-electric year of 1928. Joe Robinson, permanent chairman, did not have to raise his voice—merely to move six inches nearer the microphones—when he decided to order the Texas cowgirl off the floor at the end of the Jesse Jones demonstration. Then his words, "The lady will please remove the cavalry from the hall," roared out, drowning three brass bands and ten thousand yelling Texans.

Before a speaker can be recognized he must, as a rule, go before a committee, prove himself safe, and be put on the schedule. The program is rehearsed, amended, and censored a dozen times before it is acted. Claude Bowers's keynote speech was judged, probably, by twenty people before it was printed, and between printing and delivery someone—Senator Swanson of Virginia, it is rumored—persuaded him to omit his denunciation of dollar diplomacy.

A national political convention today is primarily a great advertising stunt. Nothing is decided on the floor that has not already been decided in the hotel rooms; and the formal work of the entire week could be done in two hours. But the prolonged big show advertises the party; it advertises the candidates; it puts favored local celebrities into the national spotlight; it forces into display on the front pages of three thousand newspapers speeches which ordinarily would not get two inches next to department-store advertising; and it glues to the radio the ears of ten million listeners-in who at any other time would tune out as soon as they heard the stentorian tone of political oratory.

It was a good show, here at Houston, but it might have been a thousand times better if the ringmasters had admitted its purpose and hired a few professional stage directors, actors, and advertising men to help them. The advertising men would have cut down the copy for the speeches, and the stage directors would have jazzed up the performance where it lagged. As it was, the interests of three audiences were confused—the relatively unimportant fifteen thousand sweltering in Sam Houston Hall, the incalculable mass of newspaper readers, and the still less calculable radio audience. Whenever an important speaker mounted the rostrum the fifteen thousand had to wait while the camera men, representing the newspaper and radio audiences, had their innings. The great Klieg lights glared, and, in full view of the Houston audience, the photographers gave the speaker his orders. "Lift your right arm," they shouted, and he obeyed. "Now the left." "Throw your head back." And the movie men, demanding action, chimed in with "Shake your fist" and "Move your lips; look as if you was talking."

It is a new age, and it needs a new oratorical technique. Claude Bowers, speaking with his own voice, made a sensation at the Jackson Day dinner in Washington; but at Houston he tried to shout to fifteen thousand people instead of speaking quietly into the microphone, and the result was a strained shriek. Franklin Roosevelt read his eloquent nominating address so slowly and deliberately that he began to bore his Houston audience, but I am told that his voice was perfect for the radio millions. There are other radio problems too. A poor gentleman from Washington came forward at the end of a hot afternoon to second Al Smith's nomination. All the States in the alphabet had preceded him, and all the speeches had been too long, and when he began "I shall be a three-minute man" the hall burst into a pandemonium of impatient cheers. The Washingtonian looked a bit bewildered; then he continued, apologetically, "But in my State thousands are listening in to hear their delegate," and hurriedly read the words which he had prepared for the superheterodynes and crystal sets of the lumber operators and apple-growers of his home State. These conventions need a radio substitute for the "leave to print" of the *Congressional Record;* speakers with messages which they feel must be delivered to their home audiences should be permitted to go off to a private microphone and broadcast to the home-Staters without boring the national radio audience and the spectators on the spot.

Good showmanship marked some of the demonstrations, but others were painfully wooden, and there was an unimaginative lack of variety. Parades for Reed, Smith, George, and even Jesse Jones of Texas all looked much alike. It was a canny politician who timed the first big demonstration for Claude Bowers's demand that "the hand of privilege shall be taken out of the farmer's pocket and off the farmer's throat." But the bands were a little slow in taking their cue. There were cheers; the audience stood up; then the excitement seemed to die. I had already jotted in my notes "one-minute demonstration" when a belated band struck up Dixie. At that point an ardent old gentleman from North Dakota danced into the aisle, jigging his State standard and calling to his neighbors to come along. Kentucky's standard followed; then, as the band moved into "There'll Be a Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight," the embattled farmers of Tammany Hall swept into the aisle and the great demonstration that the heart of Democracy was with suffering American agriculture was on. The band-leaders, at their best, had strokes of genius. When Joe Robinson launched his Vice-Presidential boom by inserting a plea for religious freedom into his prepared speech one band played "The Old-Time Religion" and "Far from the Old Folks at Home."

George Olvany handled his Tammany braves well. It was at his request that the Al Smith demonstration was

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cut short when it had matched the Hoover picnic at Kansas City. The delegates, behaving like college boys after a football victory, would have been good for another hour despite the sweat pouring down their faces. They always preferred a parade to a speech. Olvany sent emissaries to stop the battles when enthusiastic Smith delegates from other States sought to snatch State banners from unwilling Southerners. It was at his order that the convention bands refrained from playing "East Side, West Side" until Franklin Roosevelt had shouted his climax, "We offer one who has the will to win—who not only deserves success but commands it. Victory is his habit—the happy warrior, Alfred Smith." Even then these unwontedly disciplined sons of Tammany let other States precede them in the Smith parade. George Olvany was a good showman, putting on a play entitled "The New Tammany."

Before the convention opened it was certain that Smith would be nominated, and even the selection of Joe Robinson for Vice-President was sure after the first day. Two days after the platform was submitted an understanding upon all essential planks had been reached. Then for two hot days the members of the Resolutions Committee sat in a furnace-like room in the Public Library and listened to delegates from the farm organizations, the Wets and the Drys, the women and the labor men—but it was stage play. It was rank indiscipline and poor acting when Newton D. Baker showed his indifference by working out cross-word puzzles during the speeches. The Senators were better politicians.

The platform was submitted Thursday evening. On Monday the wording of the contested prohibition plank had leaked out to some of the newspapermen, and it was understood that Governor Dan Moody of Texas, leader of the Drys, had indicated that while, for the benefit of his Texas constituents, he would have to make a fight in the convention for an even Drier plank, it was not to be taken seriously; he would not make trouble. When the hour came Dan lacked the stomach to stage even a sham battle. While the sergeant-at-arms was droning out the text of the platform the tall, sandy-haired Governor wandered about, asking advice of every friend he met. When his moment came he stepped forward uncertainly and announced that he had been in a minority of one on the resolutions committee. Carter Glass of Virginia, he said, had written the plank adopted by the committee, and Josephus Daniels had approved it. Yielding to the superior judgment of his elders, he would not insist upon a vote on his minority resolution.

It was so sudden a shift that Governor Ritchie of Maryland, Wet champion, did not know of it, and set the convention in an uproar by trying to protest against the minority resolution which he thought Moody had introduced. The machinery creaked and the audience could see the wheels go round. Ritchie had not bothered to listen to Moody; he had been told beforehand what Moody would say, and prepared his reply before coming into the hall. Moody upset the play by changing his cue.

The prize play-acting, of course, was the solemn discussion of this Wet-and-Dry issue. The thought of a Tammany delegation supporting a resolution advocating enforcement of the prohibition laws is in itself enough to make Texas's old gray mare laugh; and the Drys were as hypocritical. Honest Drys have been holding prayer meetings in the churches here, but the political leaders on whom they count have been sipping from tall glasses all around the hotels. Texas boasts that it gives the Wets all the liquor they want, and the Drys all the laws they want. The great Houston millionaires who underwrote the convention are militantly Dry in public, but one provides in his hotel a sawdust-floored bar where authentic beer flows free for all newspapermen, and another rents a room to a bootlegger who dispenses, for a price, six brands of smuggled whiskey, synthetic gin, liqueurs, and champagne, to all comers, with or without introduction.

Something seems to happen to honest prohibitionists when they touch politics; they support any hypocrite who will mouth their phrases. After Al Smith had been nominated I met a Texas politician, one of Dan Moody's supporters who fought Al Smith at the State convention. "Pe'son'ly," he remarked, waving his highball with dangerous enthusiasm, "Ah'm a drippin' Wet, but p'litic'ly, Ah want you to und'stand, Ah'm a mod'rate Dry." The candor of Al Smith's telegram of acceptance, frankly setting his own Wet views in a frame of Maryland Free State doctrine, was a refreshing contrast to the mumbling of his supporters and of his political opponents at the convention. It was, to be sure, easy to be outspoken after the nomination, but at least Smith did not wait until after the election.

Despite Claude Bowers's oratorical omissions the platform includes a strong plank on non-interference with Latin-American nations. But the long and sympathetic section on agriculture reaches a very limping climax. The tariff plank, reflecting the industrialization of the South, shows a new hesitation to speak out against subsidizing industry. Neither Muscle Shoals nor Boulder Dam is mentioned, although the water-power plank vaguely declares that "sovereign title and control must be preserved respectively in the State and federal governments." Only when it comes to the sins of the Republicans does the platform cease the endeavor to please everybody and ring out in unambiguous tones. But, after all, more attention is paid to platforms before they are written than after, and Al Smith is the kind of man who becomes his own platform. Now that his astute and pussyfooting friends have won the nomination for him, he has the opportunity to put an end to this mouthing of meaningless phrases.

At Houston two fundamentally different groups within the Democratic Party met, determined to agree somehow, and that undertow made it easy for the leaders of the South and the bosses of the Northern cities, after a show of fight, to agree. The long, dull speeches were at least a sort of propaganda of harmony. Al Smith was not the favorite of the Texans in the galleries, and there were sour looks in all the Southern delegations whenever a Smith yell rent the air; behind the hullabaloo about a Dry plank lurked a lot of bitter hate of Catholics, Irish, and city men. But Al Smith's habit of victory appealed to the Southerners, and they tried to work out a sugar-coating for the bitter pill. Somehow the lesson of Madison Square has sunk deep. The Democratic Party is a sort of racial church in the South, and heresy is a crime. Hoover has promoted Negroes to minor posts in charge of white clerks in his department, and that is worse than being a Catholic. So the real leaders climbed unostentatiously on the Smith bandwagon before the balloting began, and when the votes are counted in November the Solid South, if Houston is a criterion, will be safely, if a little unhappily, in the Al Smith column.

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# British Intrigue at the Panama Canal[1]

By LUDWELL DENNY

COLOMBIA probably will be the scene of the next international oil explosion. Grave consequences are threatened by the efforts of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, a British Government concern, to get a concession with canal rights flanking the Panaman defenses of the United States.

All the elements of danger are there: Alleged British Government defiance of the "Monroe Doctrine Corollary," conflict between Standard Oil and British companies, Nature blocking petroleum exploitation, primitive tribes suspicious of alien invasion, labor trouble, "Mexicanized" laws and regulations restricting foreign control, disputed land and subsoil titles, foreign financial penetration and diplomatic intervention. On top of this explosive well sits Standard Oil, intending by the grace of the State Department to remain there.

The United States looks to Colombia to take Mexico's place as the source of American oil reserves. No one knows the extent of Colombia's petroleum resources. Apparently they stretch hundreds of miles back through tropical jungle to the Andes. But there is no natural outlet. The Magdalena River, running through the oil country, is too shallow even at its mouth for sea-going tankers. This obstacle for several years retarded subsoil development. Then the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey rushed in where only giant capital can follow.

Robert De Mares, a French engineer, later naturalized, obtained in 1905 a fifty-year concession in the heart of the Carare country. The tract lacked definite boundaries. Standard in 1916 purchased his rights, operating through its subsidiaries, Tropical Oil and Andian National Corporation. Tropical started explorations at once. But the annual production in the period of 1922-1925 was held to about 500,000 barrels. In the latter year a young engineer, Mr. M. M. Stuckey, began for Andian the task of laying 360 miles of pipe-line through the jungle to Mamonal on the coast. In eleven months this feat was accomplished. With eight pumping stations in operation, the line carried 30,000 barrels of crude oil every twenty-four hours. In August, 1927, a "loop" was completed and the daily capacity increased to 50,000 barrels. Production for 1927 was 15,000,000 barrels. Tropical, early in 1928, had a larger daily output than any other one operating company in South America. To construct the necessary pipe-line, Standard had acquired in 1923 a special concession from the Government. The company spent the large sum involved in construction only after assuring itself that the Bogota Government would pursue in the future a favorable legislative and administrative policy.

The chief conflict between American and British companies centers in and around the Barco concession area, far back in the interior against the Venezuelan frontier. General Virgilio Barco at the turn of this century happened to command Conservative troops which defeated the rebel army in Colombia's civil war. He sought reward. In 1905 he received it in the form of 1,250,000 acres of jungle land. The General lacked capital to develop his domain. In 1916 he sold it to an American-British syndicate. The Americans held a majority interest. Dutch-Shell was indirectly represented. But this syndicate could not solve the transport problem. Then the issue of titles arose to plague them. Colombian titles are described by petroleum lawyers as "the most involved titles of any oil country in the world." The Colombian Supreme Court decided the syndicate's titles were invalid. Too many other persons, native and foreign, were interested in the Barco region.

As a result of these complications, in 1926 Mr. Henry L. Doherty, chief American holder in the syndicate, arranged for the Gulf interests to obtain control through the Colombian Petroleum Corporation. Gulf has 75 per cent interest in this new company. The Caribbean Syndicate, with British and American-Doherty capital, retains 25 per cent.

Under Mellon-Gulf management the old barriers raised by the Colombian and Venezuelan governments suddenly seemed to disappear. Mr. Doherty had tried for years to make headway with the Caracas Government without success. Within less than two months after the family of the United States Secretary of the Treasury acquired control of the Barco fields, Venezuela agreed to permit a pipe-line across its territory. Now there are intimations that the Colombian Supreme Court may reverse itself, making the concession titles valid when expediency permits.

Out of this involved situation Dutch-Shell emerges. The Deterding trust is connected with Caribbean Syndicate, holding minority interest in the Barco tract. Through Equatorial Oil, Dutch-Shell is getting another foothold in that region. Other British companies there include Lobitos and Coastal Oilfields.

But the most active is the British Government company, the Anglo-Persian. An Anglo-Persian exploration party recently marched with a miniature army of mercenaries into the district of a hostile Indian tribe. After a battle the British retreated. Whether they got the geological data they sought is not known. But, it is reported, in their retreat they spread the news that they were American oil men. Since then it is not safe for a Yankee to venture within that tribe's territory. Such amenities of competition, however, are not a British monopoly. Dutch-Shell and Anglo-Persian men have worse things to say about the Americans and the Washington Government.

But recently a controversy developed which is apt to influence Anglo-American relations in that country for many years. Henry Irving Frederick Yates landed in Colombia early in 1927. He began at once to make history. This gentleman is a Briton by nationality, a colonel by title, an agent of the British Government's Anglo-Persian Oil Company by vocation. He arrived with a diplomatic passport and the prestige and immunity which that gives. His way had been prepared by the British Legation at Bogota. He negotiated with Colombian officials. The daring Colonel proposed that the Colombian Government grant

[1] This article forms part of a chapter in Ludwell Denny's new book, to be published by Alfred A. Knopf, "We Fight for Oil."

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to the British Government company a fifty-year monopoly concession for the vast area of national lands adjoining Panama and dominating the Canal approaches. Minister of Industry Montalvo, the President, and the Cabinet agreed. But certain Americans, whose business it is to know what foreign agents do in the Panama Canal region, promptly learned of the secret agreement.

What was the United States Government to do? Ordinarily its formal protest under the Monroe Doctrine would be quick and sharp. But this situation was not so simple. In the process of protecting that same Monroe Doctrine and its "Coolidge Corollary," the United States at that time was threatening Mexico, allegedly violating Panama's sovereignty with a military treaty rejected by the National Assembly, and "pacifying" Nicaragua with battleships and marines. Washington's exercise of these "duties" had been "misunderstood" throughout Latin America. Anti-Yankee sentiment was running high, especially in the South American republic next to the Panama Canal. President Coolidge had justified his Nicaraguan intervention by a declaration of "special interests." Colombians were asking: "Will our country be next?" Colombian leaders were sending protests to President Mendez, warning against American financial and economic penetration as the first step in the invasion of their country's sovereignty. Clearly it was no time for the State Department to protest to Colombia, even under the Monroe Doctrine.

Open opposition to the British Government's scheme to acquire territory flanking the Panama Canal was left, therefore, to certain Colombians whose own interests were also jeopardized. They protested to their government on the ground that the Colombian constitution and laws prohibited a foreign government from acquiring, directly or indirectly, such rights. Popular sentiment soon forced the Bogota Government, led by the British Colonel, to a strategic retreat. The Colonel belatedly decided he was not an agent of the British Government company after all. He became plain Henry Irving Frederick Yates. He agreed that this was no sort of concession to be given to a foreign government. But that it should be given to Mr. Yates as an individual obviously was an entirely different matter. The Bogota Government was quick to discern the reason of this logic. It thought, however, that others might be less logical. In order to meet any possible objections it reduced the concession area to 6,000,000 acres—along the Panaman border.

But the objections continued. The strategist decided to leave the country. He departed as plain Mr. Yates, but allegedly with a diplomatic passport and with his records and luggage under immunity and seal of the British Government. The British Minister is continuing negotiations for the concession.

The Bogota Government's act in negotiating the Yates-Montalvo concession and its attempt to put the contract into effect over the protest of the Colombian Congress is tremendously significant. Perhaps no more daring gesture against the United States's assumed authority over the Caribbean has ever been made by a South American government. What is behind this, and where will it lead? That is what Washington is wondering.

Perhaps the Colombian Government's share in formulating the Yates contract can be understood, but what about the British Government? This is not a question which Washington officials discuss before the public. Assuming that some responsible officials in London see the international menace of their Government's ownership of Anglo-Persian, perhaps they were not originally aware of that company's clumsy and provocative acts in Colombia. If that is the explanation, why does the British Legation in Bogota continue its efforts to get the concession in Mr. Yates's name? Admitting—what no one believes—that the British Government and Anglo-Persian have no further stake in the concession, what gain to Mr. Yates or any British citizen can compensate for the cost the London Government must pay in international distrust? These are some of Washington's unanswered questions.

These questions are barbed by reports of some American oil men to Washington that their survey showed no petroleum in the concession area—which may or may not prove true. They believe the concession unimportant to any British company—if oil is the only motive.

The American judgment that there is little or no oil in the proposed British concession area south of the Panaman border coincides with the American judgment that there is no gold in the British "gold" concession between the Colombian border and the Panama Canal. The Panama Corporation, a British syndicate promoted by the Earl of Cavan and Sir Alfred Mond, in 1925 obtained from the Panaman Government a ten-year monopoly gold concession. Mr. Richard O. Marsh, explorer and discoverer of the "white Indians," filed charges with the State Department against Great Britain. Mr. Marsh alleged that the British Government through this concession obtained important naval bases in Panama, the right to police territory near the Canal, and exclusive rights to the potential Panaman rubber desired by Americans to block the British world rubber monopoly. Anti-British sentiment was revived in the United States as a result of these charges and sensational press stories.

The Senate passed a Borah resolution "directing the Secretary of War to advise the Senate of all facts and circumstances relative to concessions secured by the British Government in the Republic of Panama." Investigation failed to substantiate the extreme charges. The concession covers 1,150 square miles in Veraguas province, the El Remance mines in that province, and the Darien tract of 3,400 square miles in south Panama. The area includes harbors but no major ports. The concession lands are in no case closer to the Canal than 100 miles. Though the military guard is paid by the corporation, it is "appointed" by the Government. There are other Panaman lands as well adapted to rubber cultivation. The British Government has no apparent holding in the company.

There remain, however, several questions concerning this concession which trouble some Washington officials. First, there is believed to be not sufficient gold in that region to explain under ordinary circumstances the organization of a $10,000,000 corporation. Second, the concession promoters are men who are, or have been, British Government officials. Sir Alfred Mond, former Cabinet Minister, is head of the English Chemical Trust. Mr. Andrew Percy Bennett is former British Minister to Costa Rica, Venezuela, and Panama. But the most important person, from the American point of view, is the chairman, Mr. Duncan Elliot Alves. Mr. Alves will be remembered as head of British Controlled Oilfields, organized under British Government control for the avowed purpose of obtaining Latin America's resources to be held for exclusive British Government service in time of need. Mr. Alves's record with the Brit-

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ish Controlled Oilfields and his association with the extensive and apparently valueless tract near the Panama Canal increases the mystery in Washington's mind. That mystery deepens when a British Government company attempts to get possession of another large neighboring territory across the border in Colombia.

The United States Government is especially sensitive to any act in Panama or the Canal region which suggests that a foreign Power is interested. Washington has refused repeatedly to permit foreign commercial aircraft corporations to operate in the Canal Zone. Establishment of air bases by Colonel Yates, as permitted by the proposed Colombian concession, would disturb greatly the American military and naval strategists. Washington's suspicion regarding holdings of foreign Powers extends a long distance from the Panama Canal itself. When a Japanese syndicate was reported seeking to acquire the Magdalena concession in Mexico, the State Department announced it would view with grave concern the "actual or potential possession of a harbor or any other place" by any non-American government in an area which might threaten the defenses and communications of the United States. Yates's proposed concession in Colombia would give to the British hundreds of miles nearer the Panama Canal than Magdalena Bay.

The merest hint of such a British interoceanic canal as is permitted by the Yates concession is considered a threat to basic United States commercial and naval policies. Under no conceivable circumstances will Washington permit construction of any canal connecting the Caribbean and Pacific which is not under absolute United States control. This fixed policy resulted in United States acquisition by the Wilson Administration of exclusive perpetual rights to build such a Nicaraguan canal. The amount paid was $3,000,000. That action was taken because other foreign Powers desired canal rights. Not until several years later was it apparent that the United States could well use for commercial and naval purposes two canals. Protection of these Nicaraguan canal rights, and supplemental naval base rights at Corn Islands and Fonseca Bay, was given by President Coolidge in his special message to Congress as a major reason for military intervention in that country in 1927. Congress in 1928 considered bills for survey and immediate construction of such a canal.

Political conditions in Panama also partly explain Washington's sensitiveness to the Yates contract. While the Colonel and the British Minister in Bogota were trying to obtain territory flanking the Panama Canal, the Panamans themselves were protesting the United States claim to complete sovereignty over the Canal Zone. The Panamans were not only disputing this delicate issue in secret with Washington, they were challenging the United States claims before the League of Nations. Refusal of the Panaman Assembly to ratify the United States treaty, and the prospect of continuance indefinitely of that dispute, heightens Washington's concern over complications or possible foreign intervention in the Canal region as implied in the Yates contract.

This United States policy is well known to the London Foreign Office. Therefore the British expected Washington to protest to the Colombian Government against the concession. In Bogota it was predicted that the United States would protest, and that this would induce the Colombian Congress to ratify the British contract to spite the United States. But Washington for once postponed an opportunity to flaunt its hated interpretation of the Monroe Doctrine in the face of a Caribbean country. Yates-Montalvo strategy was thus forced back to the local issue. Native opposition from the beginning had been aroused chiefly by the Bogota Government's usurpation of power. The President and Cabinet had tried to give away a right of which Congress alone could legally dispose. There was no way out then for the British and the Government except to put through Congress legislation empowering the Executive to grant such concessions. A measure known as the Sanchez bill was written by Minister Montalvo and introduced in Congress in the summer of 1927. Its passage was blocked.

The British then fell into the trap set for but avoided by Washington. Downing Street intervened, demanding, according to the Bogota press, extension of the session of Congress while discussion of an indemnification of $12,000,000 for the expropriation of a British company's mines was pending, assuring the Government that the British Foreign Office would compromise for $6,000,000 provided the Yates contract was approved. *El Tiempo* reported that the Foreign Minister read the British note in a secret session of the Senate, where it caused great indignation, the Senate deciding to protest it and to reject the settlement, which would be arranged by the Government administratively.

From the American point of view Great Britain's resort to strong-arm methods and the consequent anti-British reaction in Colombia has probably prevented for many months any action on the contract by the Colombian Congress. The British and the Bogota governments, unwilling to admit defeat, introduced in place of the Sanchez measure an Emergency Petroleum bill with a rider empowering the Executive to dispose of national lands to concessionnaires. This rider was defeated by Congress. Under the amended Emergency Petroleum law, the Yates contract must be suspended pending its acceptance by Congress or the passage of a new law empowering the Executive to grant the concession. But the new law apparently permits Yates to begin exploration whenever the Executive desires.

Having succeeded through action of the Colombian Congress in blocking the Yates contract temporarily, Washington feels it can afford to act less abruptly in dealing with Colombia's restrictive oil legislation than it did in protesting Mexican laws—unless, of course, it is faced with an "overt act" of property seizure. Washington, in the main, counts on the American economic and financial hold upon Colombia to check that country's tendency to "go Mexican." In 1926-27 Colombia borrowed $81,500,000 from the United States. At the close of that period Mr. Albert E. Ellis, Assistant Trade Commissioner, cabled the Washington Government from Bogota that the Treasury deficit was over $8,000,000. There followed in April, 1928, an additional New York loan of $35,000,000. Colombia probably is in too deep as a debtor to ignore or to defy United States policy successfully.

In reacting against her alleged bondage to the United States, both political and financial, the Colombian Government apparently has decided that the only escape is to play Great Britain against the United States, encouraging the two Powers to weaken each other. During congressional debate on the Emergency Petroleum bill, Representative Uribe Afanador and other opponents of the measure were charged by Minister Montalvo with acting for American companies. The Minister in turn was charged with representing the interests of Colonel Yates and the British.

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# *My* Private Utopia

By UPTON SINCLAIR

TWENTY-ONE years ago I made an effort to start a little Utopia for everyday use, and naturally my thinking on the subject is dominated by that experience. I will begin by telling you some of the things I learned at Helicon Hall.

Among the joys we realized was the opportunity of being alone when you wanted to be alone, and of having friends when you wanted friends. We cannot arrange matters that way in our present world, try as hard as we will. Our work and study hours get interrupted by telephone calls and knocks on the door—we can't let everybody know our habits and whims; and when we want company we have to make journeys in taxis and street cars, and we have to stay even though we find we are bored. But in our little Utopia we had our friends close at hand, and any time we felt like playing billiards we could always be sure of finding some one else in the same mood. On the other hand, if we wanted to be alone, we had our own rooms to which we might retire, with the certainty that no one would come there except by special invitation.

In the next place, we made at least a beginning at solving the "servant problem" in our Utopia. Nowadays, as I hear the ladies discussing it, I realize how large the problem bulks. Some of our married friends are doing their own housework and giving up their intellectual lives because they are so tired of trying to adjust themselves to a stream of untrained and untrainable "domestics" in their homes. There is no need to go into details, because all wives know and all husbands hear. And we really started to solve that problem in our Utopia; we got far enough at least to know that we were on the right track.

Just the other day I read a statement in print that I had founded a colony in which everybody took turns at housework. That is the common impression, and it is not true. We had a quota of regular servants at Helicon Hall; the only difference was that we did not treat them as social inferiors, but admitted them on terms of social equality and even gave them a vote as to how the colony should be run. Among many complaints which I heard on many subjects I cannot recall having heard that any one of our "colony workers" ever abused the consideration we showed. They were always quiet and courteous, and possessed by the spirit of jolly and simple democracy that is a feature of my private Utopia.

There was a pretty Irish girl who had been the maid of all work at my Princeton farm before the colony days; it was a great adventure to her to be transported to Utopia and dance on Saturday evenings with a professor of philosophy from Columbia University. It did not do the professor any harm, I am sure, or keep him from becoming a well-known writer. There was an elderly widow who did housework for the board of herself and a little son. There was an Irishman who had done kitchen work in the homes of the rich, a very humble individual and a devout Catholic, and what he made of our bunch of Socialists and Anarchists and assorted libertarians I never inquired, but he recognized kindness and consideration when he met it, exactly as other humans do. Our little Utopia was big enough so that no one had to tread on any other's toes; and when our "servants" included such individuals as Sinclair Lewis and Allan Updegraff, we could not seriously feel that our intellectual tone was being lowered.

Another problem we were on the way to solving was that of the children. It does not trouble me any more, because my son is grown up; but in those days he was only five years old, and very much determined upon having his share of life. So that made a problem for a young author and wife, and a reason for moving to Utopia. At Helicon Hall the children had a little world of their own, made especially for their convenience, and they led a social life, which is the only kind for gregarious animals. It was a small affair—only fourteen children, and that was too few—we could not afford to employ the experts we wanted, and the mothers had to cooperate. I don't say it was easy, but I do say we made a beginning, and proved that mothers can be educated when they get to the point where they really want to be. It is my belief that community care of children can be lifted to a higher plane than we find nowadays in "institutions," and that with parental supervision it can become something fine and fruitful.

Why didn't my private Utopia last? Well, in the first place, it burned down; we had had only a little money, and had had to take a jerry-built product of the profit system instead of erecting a fireproof structure according to our needs. Also, I had learned that it takes one man to organize such an enterprise and he could not be writing books at the same time. You will claim that as proof of what you call "individualism," but it means no more than this: that the cooperative spirit and technique have not yet been evolved, and that people have not yet learned to be social in their everyday lives. They will learn when they have to—which is when the wage slaves go on strike and refuse to maintain the leisure class and its system of snobbery. Then, very quickly, you will see little Utopias springing up all over the land.

One great trouble with our Utopia was the existence of a set of wolves outside who preyed upon us and left us no peace. I mean, of course, the capitalist press and the reporters they sent out to snoop in our pantry and peer into our bedroom windows. Having lived, before and since then, in leisure-class hotels, I can assert that Helicon Hall was the most "moral" community then existing in America. But the reporters of the capitalist newspapers chose to suspect otherwise and to make their readers suspect it. There was no real harm in the Columbia professor's dancing with the Irish waitress, under his wife's eyes, but the newspaper reports failed to mention the wife, and the professor was worried for his job. So were others—teachers, writers, and professional people. All that is merely repeating the fundamental Socialist thesis, that there can be no peace or safety for any individual or group in our society until there is peace and safety for all.

So you see why I am moved to turn my private Utopia into a public one. I have learned, not merely as a matter of

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theory but in practice, that as long as the masses of the people are held in ignorance and slavery, as long as they are at the mercy of predatory groups such as newspapers which fill their minds with filth and garbage and keep them subjected to superstition and prejudice—just so long can there be no real beauty in the world, and no peace for any sensitive and humane man or woman. This mob will be told by their predatory masters that they are the most wonderful and intelligent people that can possibly be imagined, and they will believe it, and will be ready to set to work at any moment to slaughter other people who do not immediately adopt their way of life and submit to being exploited by their predatory masters. It happens that I individually will soon be beyond the age where I am liable to be seized by these slave-drivers and compelled to march out and be slaughtered for them; but my son is right at the age where they will grab him—and am I to stay blissfully in retirement in my private Utopia and pay no attention to that fate which is hovering over the young men of the land?

My Utopia is first of all a spiritual thing. It involves a renunciation of that blissful certainty, which so many people cherish, that they are greatly superior to other human beings and therefore entitled to command them and put them to work. So many brilliant society ladies I have known, absolutely convinced that they were "socially" superior to the masses of women whom they didn't know, and to the servants who were compelled by poverty to wait upon them, and to the millions upon millions of men and women whose skins were colored by nature instead of by art. And yet so many of these women of the superior caste are entirely brainless and entirely useless, except that they are bringing up a child or two as brainless and as useless as the mother. The entrance to my Utopia is a pathway strewn with these superior ladies and gentlemen who have been dumped off the backs of the workers and have landed, more or less bruised and muddy, in the ditch.

I am sorry if this sounds impolite and inelegant, but the plain truth is that I don't know any way to realize a world in which I care to live while the masses of the people produce wealth for idlers to consume. I have been as patient and polite as I know how to be during the thirty years or so that my eyes have been open to this situation; I have argued and pleaded with the idlers to get off the backs of the workers voluntarily and permit Utopia to be established in an intelligent and polite way. Their answer has been to organize bands of bullies and rowdies, armed with every sort of deadly weapon, and to turn them loose upon those members of the working class who dare to raise their voices in protest against parasitism and exploitation. They have clubbed and beaten and jailed and tortured and shot and hanged the working-class leaders; when they were preparing to electrocute two of them in Massachusetts last summer, out here in Los Angeles we were not even permitted to protest. Friends of mine went to attend a meeting and found there was to be no meeting because a thousand burly fellows armed with shotguns and clubs were lined up along the street, hustling everybody along, and dragging you off to jail if you tried to halt for a moment. All the leaders and organizers of the meeting were thrown into jail under the charge which our police have invented, "suspicion of criminal syndicalism"; and everybody thinks it is all right, and nobody is doing anything about it.

Such is the private Utopia of the Merchants and Manufacturers Association of Los Angeles. And I sit off in a corner and dream about love and justice and beauty and such things, and it is as if I were smoking opium or going to church and singing hymns about heaven.

[*This is the fifth of a series of articles in which various persons describe the world they would like to live in.*]

# The Season in Moscow

By JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

## IV. *Mise en Scène*

*Moscow, June 7*

THE exuberance of the dramatic impulse in Moscow finds expression not only in acting and playwriting, but also of course in those various experiments in stage-craft which have attracted a perhaps disproportionate amount of attention in New York and elsewhere. They are so much the most easily described, photographed, and imitated aspect of the whole dramatic movement that the observer at second-hand is likely to deceive himself into believing that he has caught the essential part of it when he imagines or imitates some of the more eccentric Russian stages. But, as a matter of fact, those forms have very little meaning except when taken in connection with the whole complex of which they are a part, and they are likely to convey a very false impression of the whole when they are imitated in the dilettante fashion not unknown in New York.

In this department of theatrical activity the element of mere futuristic extravagance must be taken into account as it must in all the others, but the revolution in theatrical methods found its most important *raison d'être* in the effort to devise a means whereby the factory workers might act their own plays in the factories themselves. The platform stage was thus, in part at least, a *faute de mieux*, and the theater of Meyerhold is essentially one of these platform stages moved from the factory into a playhouse, while the theater of the Moscow Trade Unions (which I have already described) has as a stage merely a literal reproduction of a shop like one of those in which the workers first acted their revolutionary plays. Thus it is that even the mechanics of the most typically new Moscow theaters grow out of the conditions which produced those theaters and are justified largely by that fact. Since the Revolution, it is true, nearly every theater experiments more or less with unusual devices, but the more conservative the traditions of the theater the more completely it retains the general method of the old stage-craft while adopting the new devices in a manner that makes it unnecessary actually to destroy the old theatrical form. Thus, for example, though the setting for "The Breaking" (performed at one of the studios of

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the Art Theater) employs various ingenious devices like the one in which the floor of a small room is inclined at a high angle in such a way as to give the audience the impression that it is looking down upon it from above, nevertheless the whole production could be transferred to the stage of a New York playhouse without difficulty, and it is only in the playhouses whose origin was quite independent of the old theatrical world that the wholly revolutionary methods prevail. There is, in other words, a rationality and an order in the theatrical world of Moscow which it is difficult to grasp from a distance but which one perceives as soon as one has begun to study it at first-hand and which immediately differentiates that world from the often pathetically muddled attempts to imitate it in foreign lands.

I should not wish to deny that even in Moscow the theatrical world has its lunatic fringe, but it seems, unfortunately, that it is this fringe which is most easily and most frequently imitated elsewhere. I, at least, happened to see nothing in Moscow which was quite so desperately "Russian" as the Piscator Bühne in Berlin. Here the most extravagant experiments of the most extravagant Russian theater are not only imitated but perhaps carried to even more grotesque extremes, while nearly everything which makes the revolutionary theater in Russia interesting is somehow absent. Yet down in the midst of the capital of a contented and prosperous society organized upon the familiar European model, it is little more than an incongruity.

In the first place, its method of expression was not developed there and it is therefore speaking an incomprehensible language, while, in the second place, it is without the very thing which more than any other distinguishes the Russian theaters—roots which go deep into the social and intellectual life of the people. An experimental theater whose experiments are more or less controlled by an audience to which it must speak in a comprehensible language of the things which most deeply concern it is one thing; an experimental theater endowed by a millionaire (the Piscator Bühne in Berlin like the Playwrights Theater in New York has such a patron) is quite another. It may claim to speak for the proletariat, but at best it draws most of its audience from either the intellectuals or, what is far more incongruous, from the sensation-seeking members of what Mr. Wyndham Lewis calls "high Bohemia." Its eccentricities have no meaning and there is in consequence no control upon them, so that they flourish in luxurious impotence and the theater becomes only a parody of the one which it is trying to imitate.

Even if one of the revolutionary theaters of Moscow were itself transferred bodily to New York or one of the European capitals it would itself cease to be what it is at home, for the simple reason that it would cease to have that intimate relation with the life of the community which constitutes the essential characteristic of the Russian theater. Existing in a social void it would become, in spite of itself, merely "art for art's sake," or, in other words, the very antithesis of what it was intended to be; and those who profess themselves disciples of Moscow would be far more consistent if, instead of imitating the outward forms of the Russian theater, they would endeavor to achieve a genuine popularity with the masses by presenting plays written for them in forms which they comprehend and enjoy. I remarked something of this sort to both Eisenstein and Lunacharsky, and though there are not many points upon which they would agree they did agree upon this one. The first duty of a proletarian theater, said both, is to appeal to the proletariat; and as to the Piscator Bühne, Eisenstein was particularly emphatic. It is, he said, not a communist but merely a "scandal" theater.

And what is true of the mechanics of the Russian theater is true also of the institution as a whole. With the possible exception of New York, Moscow is the most active theatrical center of the world, and there is certainly no other where the visitor from New York will find so much that is new and interesting. Yet it is so much a world apart that he will find comparatively little capable of being adapted to his own stage in its present form. One may borrow a few individual stage devices, and there is an occasional play like "The Armored Train" which might be produced abroad with great success, but the Russian theater as a whole is too deeply rooted in a wholly alien social order to be able to exert any influence short of a complete transformation. Dealing with subjects different from those which occupy our dramatists, organized upon a completely different plan from that of our theater, and intended to perform a different function from that which our dramatic institutions are designed to perform, it constitutes a different world which the world of our theater only touches at a few points. It can exist only in a certain kind of society, and it cannot be imitated apart from that society. It will never be successfully introduced into the rest of the world unless all the other institutions of communistic society are introduced along with it.

In conclusion I should like to make some remarks about the nature of the Russian censorship as it affects the stage, but I was able to learn little beyond the fact that it does, of course, exist and that its authority is final, arbitrary, and absolute. A certain amount of latitude—more perhaps than one might expect—is, however, allowed. The workers' distrust of the bureaucracy sometimes finds expression and there is considerable satire in certain plays like "Mandate," where a young member of the bourgeoisie, having unofficially appointed himself a member of the Communist Party, proceeds to terrify all the neighbors with the might of that organization. Everybody trembles when its name is mentioned, and throughout the play there are many not too good-humored thrusts at the powers that be. One might also cite the case of one of the most-talked-of plays of the moment, "The Days of the Turbines," which treats very sympathetically the downfall of a White family and which reaches its conclusion when one of the members having remarked "It is the beginning of a great era" the other replies, "Yes, or the end of one." At one point in the play the Czarist hymn is played, and I am told that it caused so much excitement at the first performance that the censor insisted that in the future the edge should be taken off the scene by having it played in a slightly ridiculous fashion; but nevertheless the hymn is still played and the piece still has its ambiguous end. Apparently, then, the censor allows some criticism of the bureaucracy in order that the gap between the rulers and the ruled may not become too wide, but it is, of course, not to be forgotten that all expression of dissent takes place only by his permission. A certain amount of heterodoxy may find indulgence, but the privilege of propounding it may never be claimed as a right.

[*This is the fourth in a group of articles on the Russian theater. The three preceding this appeared in the issues of June 13, 20, and 27. Mr. Krutch will, in later issues, write on the theater in Budapest, Vienna, and Paris.*]

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# In the Driftway

A LETTER appeared lately in the New York *Times* from a user of the subway and elevated lines of the metropolis which caught the eye and warmed the heart of the Drifter. The letter is too long to reprint in full, but it read in part as follows:

> May I ask space to seek new members of "The Society of Quiet Turnstilers"?
>
> Even to those who are weary of joining things, and have highly resolved to join nothing more, I venture this appeal. Will you not belong to The S. of Q. T.? There are no officers, no dues, and no minutes of the previous meeting.
>
> The origin of this society goes back to a letter in a New York paper which I read a year or more ago, from some one whose name I regret to say I have forgotten. This writer said that he, or she, had begun operating the turnstiles of subway and elevated stations without the crashing noise that nearly all passers-through cause them to make. . . .
>
> By resting one hand on the wooden bar immediately in front of the body as one passes through, and thereby easing the stile from smashing violently against its next stopping place, a quiet operation can with very little trouble be achieved. It does not take an entire second's extra time, and delays nobody. It confers a touch upon one's neighbors' sensibilities (and one's own as well) like a contact of velvet when he was expecting the impact of a harsh hammer blow.
>
> I am hopeful that we members of the society shall be able before many more rush hours actually to change the present barbaric, devastating, and utterly unnecessary uproar of the turnstiles into considerate and neighborly approach to peace.

* * * * *

THE Drifter is not as hopeful of an early reform as the writer of this letter. A good many years' residence in the clangor of New York City has convinced him that 50 per cent of the inhabitants identify noise with pleasure, while the rest look upon it as a harmless and necessary aspect of existence, regarding any one who objects to it as eccentric if not cuckoo. The Drifter himself hopes to organize some day the Society of Angry Turnstilers, which will descend upon the subway and elevated railways in a body, bear off the turnstiles on their backs, and inter them in the Hudson River.

* * * * *

A FRIEND of the Drifter ordered a closed bus from a coach company. The latter sent an open one, but followed it with an apology which the Drifter thinks was worth the difference:

> We are very sorry to say that we had to disappoint you by sending you a open bus as we had promised you a closed bus but as our closed bus was out on a party the night before and the party was kind of rough whereby they broke three glasses in the doors and also cuting two seats which had to be fixed on Saturday as the next day was Sunday and we could not let a car go out in that kind of a condition. If there was any kind of a way that we could get a closed car on that morning we certainly would have got it as we do not promise one thing and do the other.

THE DRIFTER

# Correspondence

## Cocktail Presidents

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: "Shall Dry America," asks Bishop Cannon, "elect a 'cocktail President'?"

Well, the answer is that it has, and it inevitably will. Woodrow Wilson was an avowed Wet, before and after the passage of the Prohibition Amendment. Warren Gamaliel Harding was a dripping Wet in habitual practice, and everyone in Washington knows that he could not carry his liquor as well as Al. Calvin Coolidge is personally Dry, but Washington society does not report that Herbert Hoover turns down his glass when he dines at the Belgian Legation. It is a strange country where bishops oppose men because they preach what they practice.

*Washington, D. C., June 30* JONATHAN EDWARDS, JR.

## Not for Silver, Anyway

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: In the beginning, Borah assumed the leadership in the Norris movement and, with much beating of tom-toms, proclaimed he would battle for progressivism in both Presidency and platform.

In the end, we found him pulling shoulder to shoulder with Vare and Hays and Slemp and Smoot to put over Hoover and Curtis and the same old platitudinous twaddle.

Somebody, somewhere, once wrote something about: "Just for a handful of silver he left us; just for a riband to stick in his coat."

*Chicago, June 15* FREDERIC BABCOCK

## Robinson and Millay

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: In your editorial on Literary Prizes you express a fairly definite satisfaction with this year's Pulitzer Prize awards; and that is all very well as far as personal opinion goes. But when you say of "Tristram" that "it had no prominently close rivals during the year," I find myself challenging you. No close rivals? Have you forgotten "The King's Henchman"? Apart even from its greatness as an opera, Millay's work seems to me more than a mere "rival" to Robinson's poem. It has all the earth-power which Robinson lacks. It is broader, harder, clearer, and its roots go deeper. Millay throws herself into the life that surges through her men and women; Robinson prefers to stand aside, watching, speculating, with smiling, patient gestures. He is a good philosopher in homespun, but he has thin veins; he lacks the life-force that makes for great poetry.

Technically, of course, "Tristram" is very fine. It has fine spots. But it has no real qualities of emotion. A love story without emotions—almost entirely a mental thing. You will say that is because it is "modern," but I doubt that we "moderns" are so "mental," after all. It is possible that, now and again, a white-livered attitude may be mistaken for a sign of cerebration.

There is another thing about the awarding of these prizes interesting to observe: the three most important awards went to books which were popular successes. Whether that means that the public taste is looking up or that the judges are powerless before swift currents is another question.

*Cannondale, Connecticut, May 28* JOHN HYDE PRESTON

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# Books

## Love Coming Late

By MARY AUSTIN

Love came to me late
having sent on before him
all his great company.
Young love with his perfumed torch
beguiling the senses;
Passion, whose feet when I kissed them
blackened my mouth;
Duty that galled me worst
where the hurt was sorest.

Then with a sound of wings
down-edged for silence,
With a stir as of evening primroses blowing
wide apart among orchard grasses
Secret, contained and aware
great Love came walking.
Came and sat down at the loom
where I stooped overwearied,
Swift were his hands and light on the shuttle;
And suddenly, as he wrought,
duty and passion and youth
came back and served him!

## A Masterly Survey

*The Native Problem in Africa.* By Raymond Leslie Buell. The Macmillan Company. Two volumes. $15.

MR. BUELL'S book more than satisfies the expectation with which its publication has been awaited. It surveys the "Native Problem" in French, British, and Belgian Africa and in Liberia, abstaining, however, from any account of Portugal's dealings, which, in fact, form an integral and essential part of the matter necessary for illustration and reinforcement of the principal generalizations which impose themselves through a perusal of this otherwise extremely complete and impressive critical survey.

Vast as the book is (it must contain, with its notes and appendices, about a million words), no one with a preliminary acquaintance with the provinces dealt with will find a sentence superfluous. Indeed the enormous subject is handled with real economy. The writing is never tedious. Although in different territories similar fundamentals have repeatedly to be dealt with, there are always local differences of substantial importance. The careful studies of administration in the immense areas controlled by France in Africa will be specially welcome to those whose acquaintance has been principally with British African territories or whom the evil notoriety of Portuguese methods and the scandals of the earlier maladministration of the Congo Free State have caused to pay special attention to subsequent developments there. As to the Congo one is impressed with the seriousness and determination with which the Belgian Government has approached the responsibilities which it undertook when the Free State's rule was transferred to it. Mr. Buell's account justifies an opinion that in liberality and intelligence in her African administration, and in the practical application of the principles of the strength of which the infernal rule of the Congo Company was evicted, Belgium is now the most admirable of imperial Powers in Africa.

The book is valuable not only for its well-balanced historical summaries and its analyses of contemporary conditions in their salient aspects, but because it reprints the most important international documents and the cardinal administrative memoranda and statistics bearing upon African imperialism.

There is a devastating chapter about Liberia and the Firestone agreement, which as a Briton, more sensible, perhaps, than most of my fellow-countrymen of the large amount of glass in the structure of my country's imperial policy, I prefer to do no more than commend to the digestion of American citizens as a temperate and justified account of the most ominously cynical deal between Western capitalism and an African people that has transpired since the constitution of the Congo Free State.

To anyone who has had special occasion and opportunities for continuously observing the dealings of white enterprise with Africa during the last forty years this scholarly and unprejudiced survey will be immensely corroborative and reinforcing. The partition of Africa was not a humanitarian enterprise. Mr. Chamberlain described it as having provided Britain with undeveloped estates from which it was her duty to extract raw materials for her own people, opening them at the same time as markets for British goods. The purpose of every other European participant in the scramble was precisely the same. France had added the notion of establishing a reservoir and recruiting ground for her armies.

This modern commercial determination of white men, of which the Firestone Agreement is the latest manifestation, to handle the resources of Africa for their own profit, operates of its own natural virtue on quite simple and self-satisfactory principles. For its economy it needs command of the land: it needs labor to mature and extract produce and to build roads for its transportation. Even when it does not need all the land for its own operations it is prone to take it away from the natives in order that they may not use it for purposes desirable only to themselves, or remain indifferent to the wages white enterprise is prepared to offer. Mr. Buell gives a bird's-eye view of the operation of this economy in every part of Africa which he visited. Further, in order to induce the native to labor for the developer various modes of pressure are exercised ranging from poll-taxes to directly compelled service. In order to reinforce its control, European enterprise usurps the nation's government and destroys his own. Mr. Buell historically documents the course of this process in all parts of Africa, and its reactions.

These processes were let loose upon Africa from fifty to forty years ago. Those who engaged in them were not egregious sinners; they argued that civilization would be a boon to the native; they proved that it was better for him to work at wages than at his own affairs, and they believed that it was good for him to be compelled to work, so that he should not waste so much time in dancing and drinking (pastimes recognized by the cinema as the choicest emblems of our own civilization).

The impulse of exploitation, however, has not been the sole force at work: there has all the time been active also that sane appreciation of the essentials of human life and of the rights of African and other weaker peoples which had already repressed the grosser and more palpable forms of Negro slavery. That influence has been principally kept alive in Africa by the missionaries of all Christian denominations. It has also been effectually represented by a minority of intelligent and high-minded governors. National governments, too, have professed to stand for this morality, but in practice they have been consistently humbugged by the moral ideology of the Development school, and where they have not been humbugged the developers have been too smart for them, and have too often stolen the horse before instructed humane intelligence or public opinion could get to the door. There is also, fortunately, a considerable and distinctly increasing power among the natives themselves

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of neutralizing, resisting, and reacting against the policies of expropriation, forced labor, and destruction of political freedom which exhibit the crude impulses of the economic school. Nothing is more interesting in Mr. Buell's book than his testimony, in every part of Africa that he deals with, to a distinct turn of the tide. For example, against land expropriation, which the British Government allowed in Rhodesia but is now checking in Kenya, against forced labor, which the International Labor Office is elaborating a convention to control and in time to extinguish, and against the destruction of native self-government, against which some British administrators have from the first set their faces.

Mr. Buell concludes not unhopefully. "Africa is the one continent where by the application of intelligence, knowledge, and good-will it is not too late to adopt policies which will prevent the development of the acute racial difficulties which have elsewhere arisen, and the evils of which have been recognized only after they have come into existence. In the larger part of Africa the white man still has *carte blanche* to avoid the mistakes of the past committed in other parts of the world if he has will and intelligence to do so." No one who reads this book can feel any doubt as to the leading principle on which alone such development can be imagined possible. The African must be recognized as a human being having a soul and rights of his own.

LORD OLIVIER

# Herbert Hoover Again

*Who's Hoover?* By William Hard. Dodd Mead and Company, 1928. $2.50.

*The Presidency vs. Hoover.* By Samuel Crowther. Doubleday, Doran and Company, 1928. $2.50.

WILLIAM HARD could not write a dull line if he chose. Usually he writes with an original style and much humor. Hence his campaign biography of Mr. Hoover has a justification—there are now three such in the field, with, we shudder to think, more probably to come. Mr. Hard is an intense admirer of the subject of his book; hence it ought to commend itself to the Republican National Committee. That does not mean, however, that his estimate of the Republican candidate is uncritical. He does not try to conceal some of the obvious weaknesses of his hero, as, for instance, Mr. Hoover's extraordinary sensitiveness to criticism. He "collects the clippings containing them. He broods over them. He sends emissaries to his attackers to explain the righteousness of the event which they have misinterpreted." Mr. Hard contrasts the attitude of Calvin Coolidge who was asked by a friend if he was not disturbed by a Democratic attack upon him in a magazine. "Oh," said Mr. Coolidge, according to Hard, "I remember. The magazine had a green cover. I started reading the article, but it was against me; so I quit."

Mr. Hard admits that that period in 1920 when Mr. Hoover vacillated between being a Democrat and a Republican—because of Woodrow Wilson and the League of Nations—was "an unquiet and inconsistent interlude in his life," from which we are left to deduce that his years in Harding's crooked Cabinet and his service in Mr. Coolidge's represent the quiet and consistent Hoover! Despite one's opposition to the League of Nations one may be pardoned for preferring the unquiet and inconsistent Hoover and dreading the other one who, as Wendell Phillips would have said, is "silent in the presence of sin." As for Mr. Hoover's joining thirty other "magnificently distinguished and magnificently deluded Republicans in issuing a manifesto to the the American people declaring that the best and shortest road to the palace of peace at Geneva was through a White House inhabited by Warren Gamaliel Harding"—why that, says Mr. Hard, was false simply and solely "because Harding at that very moment was irrevocably personally pledged against ever actually taking the United States into the League organism." That explanation satisfies the ever-kindly Mr. Hard. But it leaves the reader gasping with wonder that this great superman of the world, Herbert Hoover, never stopped to ask Warren Harding whether he, Hoover, was telling a lie or not! As for Mr. Hoover's achievements in the Cabinet, notably in standardizing shoestrings, sealing wax, and sticks, and decreasing for all American fishermen "the time between bites," Mr. Hard tells them all delightfully, more convincingly than are his efforts to cover those black spots which have made millions lose faith in his hero.

Mr. Crowther's tribute is more ambitious. It begins with a study of the Presidency, and there we have the gratifying news that "the great advance has come under the Administration of Calvin Coolidge. For he has conceived of government as an aid to progress and not as an obstacle—or as an end in itself." Shades of William McKinley, Mark Hanna, Warren Harding, and every apostle of protection! Next we learn the profound truth that "the political thought of yesterday will not fit the needs of today. . . . It does matter who is President. It matters mightily." From this we naturally wander, after the inevitable recounting of how Mr. Hoover standardized the bathtub, helped to decrease unemployment, and to increase prosperity, to this inevitable conclusion: "In short, that Herbert Hoover is the one man who can now lead to a fuller life—who can lead to the previously impossible state in which poverty in this country can be put on a *purely voluntary basis* [italics mine]. In the succeeding chapters this will be demonstrated." In other words, this book is a useful summary of what Mr. Hoover has achieved, and paints a highly ingenuous and glowing picture of the way we are going to be standardized and mechanized into undreamed-of prosperity. Which is, of course, the end-all of our national aspirations, the final aim of the Republic. What ass was it that said: "Without a vision the people perish"? Here is Hoover to demolish him.

OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

# The Behavior of Museums

*The Behavior of the Museum Visitor.* By Edward Stevens Robinson. Washington, D. C.: American Association of Museums.

IF museums behaved differently would they have more visitors? There is a question worth trying to answer. The present study of the museum visitor deals with four museums only; it considers the behavior of only 204 visitors; it noted their behavior only in the presence of paintings; it reports that only 23 of the 204 stopped to look at any picture for more than sixteen seconds; and it concludes that museum directors should become experimental psychologists, observe the behavior of their visitors, and from a study of that behavior learn how they may so modify museum management as to make museums more profitable to visitors. The study seems to have been made with care and ingenuity; but the basic question is not answered by the study, as the author seems ready to admit.

The purpose of the inquiry was to discover such facts concerning the reaction of visitors to museums as would enable museum managers so to arrange their exhibits and so to modify their general method as to make their institutions more attractive, more inspiriting, and consequently more frequented and more useful than they now are. But the facts selected are not those which most need study. The problem which confronts the open-minded museum manager is not "How does a visitor behave when he comes into a museum?" but "Why does he so rarely come?" It will not be easy to get an answer to the latter question; but it should surely have been possible to get reports from a few thousand educated, intelligent, and cultivated persons on why a museum so rarely persuades them to come within its doors.

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Several of our larger and wealthier cities have, in the last few decades, erected museum buildings at the cost of several million dollars each; then have acquired by gift and purchase rare and expensive objects at a further cost for each of many thousands more; and then have found that the visits paid to these museums are exceedingly few. Quite extravagant claims are made by managers and advocates of museums of rarities. The most perfect and consequently the most beautiful things ever made by man will, we are told, if visited in a museum and gazed upon with the proper spirit of awe, wonder, and admiration, impart to most of those who thus gaze upon them a certain power which will gradually negative their native tendency to love the mean, cheap, and tawdry,—true art being of course assumed to be the kinds of things they have seen in the museum. But the prophecy that an artistic regeneration will follow solemn examination of museum pieces is rarely fulfilled. It seems that most visitors go away from a museum with a keen sense of duty done—which, as Joseph Cook used to tell Bostonians, is "the soul's own fireside"—but with no exaltation of taste. Museums continue to be built and filled with what man has done in preceding centuries; and meanwhile the citizens hasten daily to department stores to admire, desire, and buy what their fellow-citizens are making and beautifying right now.

It is admitted that museums are built primarily to influence people to good ends—in fact, to educate. This they cannot well do unless the people visit them. A study of the cost of museums and of their upkeep and a glance at the total of their annual visitors suggest that they do, in proportion to the money spent on them, less of that which they are chiefly established to do than does any other educational factor which the city supports.

What can be done about it? Well, I repeat my suggestion that an effort be made to discover, not how we behave in a museum, but why we are so rarely in it.

JOHN COTTON DANA

# Russian Women

*Woman in Soviet Russia.* By Jessica Smith. Vanguard Press. Fifty cents.

THIS is a study of one of the most chameleon-like organisms in modern society—the social family. In a short volume of 200 pages the author presents a moving picture of the Russian woman in industry, in education, in public life, on the farm, and in the family. To the individualist who projects his family ideology into the world about him this must indeed be a strange tale of social adjustments. For in Russia all activity focuses upon the group and its welfare. We in America have long been fed on a diet of articles, theories, explanations of the new morality, the changing status of woman, the new education. It is but a ballyhoo of frantic cries against a national background of laissez faire.

The trends in Russia which Miss Smith describes are equally at variance with their native background. There is, however, a consistent and sturdy growth of sincere governmental concern, a desire to socialize the individual and minimize the frictions which the old concepts create as they are supplanted by the new. The tremendous advancement which has been made in government regulation of women in industry, in politics, in education, and in sex relationships is noteworthy. It is an amazing tale of what has been accomplished in the rehabilitation of a social order. All the heartaches of doffing old customs and ideas and arraying a nation in new social garments built for the ideal figure are to be found in this book. The mujik and his wife squirm and twist in the new garb, but they do not cast it aside. It promises to fit them or they it.

Thus the laws affecting the two and a half million women workers are the most progressive and socially far-sighted to be found in any country in the world. In actuality there are variations, but the laws furnish a norm to which industry is adjusting itself. In most capitalistic countries laws are the crystallization of the customs and experiences of the country. In Russia they are a sort of advance guard to which the social group moves. Miss Smith graphically describes Russian women in different walks of life—their sudden awareness that the nation is with them even though their men-folk in the shop or on the farm may not be. Side by side with the new woman, to be sure, lives the Russian peasant woman with her bundle of fears and superstitions. Even she walks a little more firmly when she finds she may not be beaten by her husband every Saturday night. There is a community organization to protect her.

Miss Smith's little book is replete with vital sociological material and keen observations. It fills the jaded American economist or sociologist with new hopes.

THERESA WOLFSON

# A Pan-American Novel

*La Sombra de la Casa Blanca* (*The Shadow of the White House*). By Maximo Soto-Hall. Buenos Aires: El Ateneo.

THE Nicaraguan situation has inspired the only historical novel of international scope ever written in Latin America—a fact which makes "The Shadow of the White House" a literary landmark. Dealing with American-Nicaraguan relations, with special reference to the present tragedy, it is a volume of timeliness and interest. The attitude of the Latin-American toward the United States and its policy of armed intervention in Latin-American affairs is presented with force. Dr. Soto-Hall, born in Guatemala, has passed practically his entire life in Central America, and by his writing has achieved a reputation throughout the Spanish-speaking world.

The story tells how Alberto Urzua, a young gentleman prominent in Nicaraguan public life, comes to the United States when the political party under which he holds office is overthrown in a revolution. He and his two sisters settle in New York. Urzua works for an American firm doing business in Central America. He makes friends with an American judge and his daughter, marries an American girl, and learns to admire the good things this country possesses. Finally, however, he sees enough to convince him of the shadow cast across the highway of international justice by the deplorable partnership of the White House and Wall Street. This time the shadow happens to fall upon his country. Crushed in his heart by this and private misfortunes, he sails for Nicaragua to fight the marines. Someone dear to him follows him—neither his sisters nor his wife. It is Virginia Harrison, the judge's daughter. She and Urzua had become faithful friends. Meanwhile the judge had died and Virginia, from Kentucky, goes to Nicaragua as a nurse in Urzua's camp. She arrives in time to receive him in her arms when, struck by a shell dropped from an airplane, the hero ceases to be.

Most of the characters are not difficult to recognize, if only because they are types of men commanding high positions in American imperialism. Mr. Stallson, American banker, is depicted as the power behind a coup d'etat government in Nicaragua, recognized and supported by the United States through his influence. As presented by Dr. Soto-Hall, Mr. Stallson is known throughout Latin America with a different name in each country, but his character and perhaps even his appearance remain the same. The American Senator who writhes with indignation at his Government's bungling policies in Nicaragua also is presented with exactitude.

Through personages who play in the book parts somewhat resembling the chorus in Greek tragedy, Dr. Soto-Hall undertakes digressions into other Pan-American problems with prophetic vision. Mr. Coolidge had just prononuced his decision on the Tacna-Arica question between Chile and Peru. Fernandez,

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—*Stuart Chase in the L. I. D.* Bulletin.

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—*Senator Carl Hayden on the floor of the U. S. Senate.*

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friend of Urzua, remarks that the President of the United States has chosen to make both Chile and Peru believe they are right without making either nation's position right; and he indicates what is going to happen next:

> The United States will submit an arrangement full of equity and justice. . . . Bolivia is anxious to have a harbor on the Pacific. . . . The North Americans are in a position to help her fulfil her aspirations. . . . They will provide Bolivia with the necessary capital that she may buy from Chile and Peru the disputed provinces. . . . But American capitalists are shrewd enough to render Bolivia unable to pay back. For what, then, are factories of revolutions? For what that new, unique industry? . . . Bolivia will not be able to pay. . . . The great republic will come to own the rescued provinces.

During the dispute between Chile and Peru the Secretary of State of the United States did offer a proposal almost exactly like this one.

"The Shadow of the White House" is not a book written for the historian. It is a novel primarily addressed to the man in the street. But it presents with force and romance the present Nicaraguan conflict and the attitude of the Latin-American toward the United States Government's policies.

RODOLFO MAYORGA-RIVAS

## Books in Brief

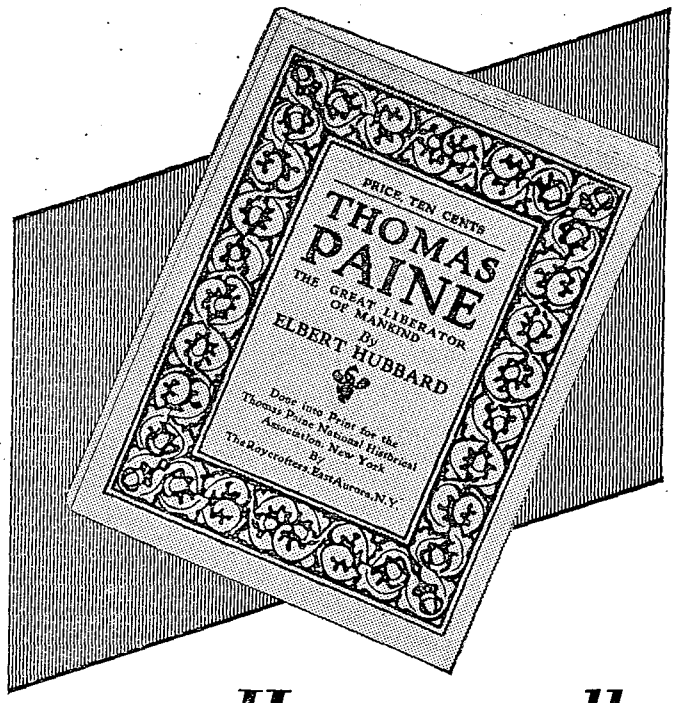
*Reverse English: Some Off-side Observations Upon Our British Cousins.* By J. Frederick Essary. W. E. Rudge, Inc. $3.

The essays in this book originally appeared in the Baltimore *Sun* while their author was serving as London correspondent. In that setting they formed a readable comment on passing events in England, but they are rather too slight to withstand the rigors of transplantation. Mr. Essary's reactions to the British were very like those of less-trained American observers. He admired the politeness of the London police, was impressed by the royal family (though with a good American twinkle in his eye), marveled at the crooked nonchalance of the London streets, and suffered from the native cooking. All in all he enjoyed his stay immensely and returned home firmly convinced that "there is nothing so vital to mankind, so vital to its peace, its security, and its progress as an enduring friendship between these two mighty English-speaking nations." That is a worthy, if somewhat trite, sentiment. But one could wish that Mr. Essary had found a better example of the kinship of Britain and America than their readiness to cooperate in maintaining Western supremacy in China

*New Towns for Old.* By John Nolen. With an Introduction by Albert Shaw. Boston: Marshall Jones Company. $3.

*The Legal Aspects of Zoning.* By Newman F. Baker. University of Chicago Press. $2.50.

These two books complement each other admirably, Mr. Nolen's being a completely illustrated account of the most outstanding examples of modern American city planning and Mr. Baker's a scholarly discussion of the law with regard to zoning which is the foundation of much of the American effort in this direction. Without doubt Mr. Nolen's book will have the wider popular appeal and its fascinating photographs of what has already been accomplished should prove stimulating. Particularly valuable is its carefully documented story of Kingsport, Tennessee; Walpole, Massachusetts, and Mariemont, Ohio. Mr. Baker's book, while it lacks these illustrations, is even more important for the student of city planning, and in its own careful, legal manner is exciting as well, for in it can be traced the history of the significant development of the idea that personal property is subsidiary to the common good. The notes of cases appended to each chapter should prove of great value to the real-estate lawyer, the city planner, and the architect.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*The Reign of Terror, 1793-1794, The Experiment of the Democratic Republic, and the Rise of the Bourgeoisie.* By W. B. Kerr. The University of Toronto Press. $4.

Here is something to get excited over—a work in English about the climax of the French Revolution that insults neither that much misunderstood movement nor yet the intelligence of the reader. Dr. Kerr's study has its full share of scholarly qualities, but it possesses in addition a freshness and a tart, ironic flavor. Every page bears witness to the researches of Professor Mathiez of the Sorbonne, whose work has thrown so much fresh light upon the economic conditions of revolutionary Paris as well as upon the aims and tactics of the leaders. The dependence is hardly servile; but basically the two scholars stand together in their sympathetic treatment of the great experiment and in their recognition of the loftiness of Robespierre's ideals, against the smug half-truths with which the orthodox historians have piously travestied the sense of the revolutionary movement.

*The Inquiring Mind.* By Zechariah Chafee, Jr. Harcourt, Brace and Company. $2.50.

Shortly after the war Professor Chafee published his "Freedom of Speech"—a temperate and scholarly exposition of the subject especially for those trying times. He thus aligned himself with sanity and liberalism, and in the following years was frequently called upon by liberal editors for occasional articles treating the various crises in the struggle for civil liberty. It is these resultant examples of scholarly journalism which he now offers in the main—the philosophical discoveries promised by the title are only a small part of the book. On the whole, it is to be doubted if the miscellaneous articles deserved the permanence of book publication. Some of them represent issues that are no longer urgent or alive; and all are easily available in the files of current magazines. In other words, the present collection is not to be regarded so much as a book as a series of Appendices to "Freedom of Speech."

*New England's Outpost. Acadia Before the Conquest of Canada.* By John Bartlett Brebner. Columbia University Press. $4.50.

Longfellow's rather over-sweet poem "Evangeline" gave the sorrows of the Acadians, expelled from Nova Scotia in 1755, a place among the classic brutalities of war. Mr. Brebner links with New England, rather than with the government of Great Britain, the origins of this episode and, with a careful use of only original authorities and an entire freedom from the passions with which the literature of the subject is tainted, shows how the last dramatic climax came about. He refrains from the details of the expulsion. His is a study of causes; his well-written book removes the episode from the realm of poetry and passion to that of calm and not too prosaic history. The descendants of New England loyalists in Canada may find perhaps grim humor in reflecting that it was their own fathers who made the beginnings of the game of driving the vanquished from their homes.

*The Migration of British Capital to 1876.* By Leland H. Jenks. Alfred A. Knopf. $4.

Here is a book of immense industry and fine skill. It traces in detail the making of the invisible empire of finance which Britain established in the half-century that followed the Napoleonic War, a really astounding achievement of profitable adventure. To track out the finesse of the changing money market in these intricate adventures required no ordinary research, and the notes at the end of Professor Jenks's book show a mastery not only of the ordinary sources but of masses of banking and journalistic records which nobody has tapped before. Few students in history were even aware of the great collapse of British export of capital following 1876. The story of the financing of Egypt and the capture of the Suez Canal was falsified by all our general historians until Professor Jenks

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worried out the truth. Though such highly specialized work is not for every man's reading, it should find a lasting place in every good library.

*Political Philosophy from Plato to Jeremy Bentham.* By Dr. Geza Engelmann. Translated by Karl Frederick Geiser. With an Introduction by Oscar Jaszi. Harper and Brothers. $4.

This book contains terse and direct summaries of most of the classics in political philosophy, from Plato's "Republic" to Bentham's "Constitutional Code." Each summary is preceded by an introduction containing historical and biographical material. Better than other texts in this field does the present one succeed in offering the subject in the form of a symposium on the basic problems of politics. It is, however, difficult to concede the claim of Professors Geiser and Jaszi that as a textbook the present work is immensely superior to the available outlines of the history of political ideas. A mere change in the method of presentation is, after all, not of crucial significance.

*The Conception of Buddhist Nirvana.* By Th. Stcherbatsky. Leningrad: The Academy of Sciences of the USSR.

This bit of close reasoning is meant only for those who are already familiar with the subtleties of Buddhist philosophy and the problems it furnishes modern scholarship. Professor Stcherbatsky, one of the most profound students of Buddhism, makes an attack upon the theory of M. de la Vallée Poussin, another profound student of Buddhism, that "at the beginning Nirvana meant a simple faith in the soul's immortality, its blissful survival in a paradise, a faith emerging from practices of obscure magic." Countering this theory and also, more casually, opinions of A. B. Keith and other distinguished scholars, Professor Stcherbatsky believes that "Buddha . . . proposed, or accepted, a system denying the existence of an eternal soul, and reducing phenomenal existence to a congeries of separate elements evolving gradually toward final extinction." The book is an important, and hence highly technical, study of a major question.

*The Forerunners of Saint Francis and Other Studies.* By Ellen Scott Davison. Houghton Mifflin Company. $5.

In this posthumous publication Miss Davison's story of the visionaries who preached and practiced evangelical poverty within and without the medieval church carries the weight of scholarly conclusions, derived from the author's careful survey of the more important printed sources. Yet the book is far more intensive and impressive than any mere array of facts, for, as Professor Shotwell says in his foreword, it is "touched with the historic imagination and informed with sympathetic understanding." A large perspective reveals the causes of the seeming success of the reformers who won churchly sanction, like the Cistercians and Carthusians, and the reasons for the apparent failure of other enthusiasts no more or less sincere, like the Albigensians, who forced from reluctant prelates the punishment of curse and crusade. And a deep sense of the futility of sundry spiritual ideals and aspirations, temporarily triumphant, pervades the forecast of the ultimate wreckage of the hopes of austere founders of monastic orders, Bernard, Norbert, the Stephens, through a deadlier ban than papal anathema, worldly prosperity. Even the incomplete sketches near the end of the book are based upon a wealth of documents duly recorded in the spacious bibliography. Notes and index conclude this consecrated labor of love and friendship.

Thomas Gray: *Elegy Wrote in a Country Church Yard. 1751.* Samuel Johnson: *The Vanity of Human Wishes. 1749.* William Collins: *Ode Occasion'd by the Death of Mr. Thomson. 1749.* Matthew Prior: *Occasional Verses. 1702-1719.* Oxford University Press. Respectively $1.25, $2, $1.75, $2.25.

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# International Relations Section

## A Jewish State in the Soviet Union

By LEON TALMY

OUT in the remote regions of the Russian Far East, in an unpopulated district between the Amur River and the Small Khingan (Bureya) Mountains, some six hundred Jewish pioneers from various parts of the Soviet Union have lately been engaged in clearing tracts of land, plowing virgin soil, laying roads, building barracks and houses, and preparing the country to receive the first few thousand settlers who will follow in the spring of 1929.

Though, at first glance, there seems to be nothing extraordinary in this fact, it is an event which carries with it an historic significance equal to that of the steps of the first pioneers in many a now busy and thriving land. It marks a momentous turning-point in the life of the Jewish population of the Soviet Union and, incidentally, in the story of the particular district which is destined to be linked with the formation of a Jewish state in the system of Soviet republics.

As a matter of fact, this district has not had much of a story. Prior to January, 1928, its very name—Bira-Bidjan—was virtually unknown outside the immediate vicinity. And even there the name has never been used to convey a definite geographical or ethnographical conception. It came into use only recently to denote a part of the Amur country covering an area of some thirty thousand square kilometers traversed by the rivers Bira and Bidjan and bounded on its west, south, and east by the Amur River and on its north by a line running parallel to and north of the railway line connecting the city of Khabarovsk with the Transbaikal region and Chita. These boundaries have been in force since March 28, 1928, when, by a decision adopted by the Praesidium of the All-Union Central Executive Committee of the Soviets, the district was set apart for Jewish colonization under the supervision of the Comzet, the Government Committee for Jewish Land Settlement, with the view to creating a Jewish national administrative unit.

Within these boundaries lives at present a population of about 27,000, dwelling mainly along the left bank of the Amur across the river from Manchuria and along the railway line which was completed after the war. The interior of the country, a valley covered with luxurious grass, wild roots, bushes, and occasional clusters of trees, as well as the mountainous regions in the western part of the district, has remained practically uninhabited. According to the report brought in by the special scientific expedition of the Comzet, headed by Professor B. L. Brook and under the general supervision and direction of Professor Williams, which had explored the country in the summer of 1927, the prairie lands of the district offer good possibilities for the development of various branches of agriculture, including the cultivation of rice and oil beans. The forest lands extending to the north will permit the development of forestry and the timber industry. The mountainous regions have as yet been little explored, but the data at hand warrant the conclusion that they contain mineral deposits which will eventually furnish the basis for industrial development. The land suitable for crop cultivation will sustain a farming population of 35,000 families and an additional 15,000 families engaged in various auxiliary industries and occupations; altogether, a population of about 250,000 under conditions of purely agricultural colonization. With the further development of the natural resources the country could absorb a population of 1,000,000 or more.

It was on the basis of the findings of the scientific expedition that the Comzet decided in January, 1928, to propose to the highest Soviet authorities that the district of Bira-Bidjan be set aside for the express purpose of Jewish colonization. The expedition itself was one of a number which had been sponsored by the Comzet in connection with its work of settling Jews on the land. These expeditions conducted explorations in several parts of the Soviet Union in quest of a large tract of land suitable for Jewish mass colonization after it became apparent that the free land available for such purposes in the Ukraine, Crimea, and White Russia would soon be exhausted, while the necessity for Jewish land settlement would continue.

The conditions which created this necessity date back to the economic situation of the Jews during the Czarist regime. In the old empire the Jewish population was confined to the so-called "Pale," a number of provinces in which Jews were permitted to live. Within this Pale there was another "Pale" of economic restrictions: Jews had no access to the large industries and, outside of a few old Jewish agricultural colonies in the Southern Ukraine, they were not permitted to live in villages and engage in agriculture. Thus the mass of the Jewish population of old Russia was confined to such economic pursuits as petty trade and small artisanship. Quite apart from political persecution, the economic circumstances of the Jews were so precarious that tens of thousands were forced to emigrate every year in search of friendlier shores and better economic opportunities. Most of these emigrants settled in the United States and Canada. Some went to Argentina, Brazil, South Africa, Australia. With the beginning of the World War this steady stream of Jewish emigration from Russia was stopped abruptly, leaving no outlet for the surplus population. After the war the quota and other restrictions introduced in the United States and in other countries permitted only a trickle of this stream to filter through, while at the same time conditions at home became much worse owing to the physical destruction wrought by the World War and the civil war following the Revolution.

In the Soviet Union the situation was further aggravated by the introduction of a new economic system to take the place of the old pattern into which the Jews had somehow managed to fit. The new system obviated the necessity for most of the economic functions which of old had been a sort of a "birthright" of the Jewish population. Although private trade has not been completely abolished, the economic basis of its existence is surely disappearing as trade becomes concentrated in the cooperatives and state organizations. So also the basis for petty artisanship is slowly but surely giving way with the rapid development of machine industries.

The Soviet Government has been adopting measures to alleviate the situation and to create such conditions for the

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Jewish population as will give them the opportunity to find their place in the new economic scheme of things.

Attention both inside and outside of the Soviet Union has been chiefly centered on the work of Jewish land settlement. This is undoubtedly due to the political significance attached to Jewish colonization in the Soviet Union by both foes and friends of the work; partly, also, to the fact that for the greater success of this phase of Jewish reconstruction work it was necessary to resort to assistance from outside sources, chief among which was the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee which operates in the Soviet Union through the Agrojoint. The work was put on an organized basis in 1924, when by a decree of the Soviet Government, the Comzet, a government committee for Jewish land settlement, was formed. As a result of the efforts of such organizations, with the material assistance of the Soviet Government, a population of upward of 80,000 Jews has been settled on 302,000 dessiatins of land in Southern Ukraine, Northern Crimea, and White Russia during the four years, 1924-1927. The total Jewish agricultural population in the Soviet Union has reached 175,000 as against some 53,000 in 1913, and Jewish landholdings have increased from 75,000 dessiatins in 1920 to 452,000 dessiatins in 1927.

However, the success attained so far in improving the economic conditions of the Jewish masses in the Soviet Union has not been sufficient to offset the burden of their economic heritage. A large number, roughly estimated at from 600,000 to 800,000 out of a Jewish population of about 2,800,000, are still without any apparent means of existence. Although Jews in increasing numbers are finding employment in the Soviet industries, this channel is hardly sufficient to absorb the natural increase of population. The only possibility which offers speedier relief for the mass of the "declassed" Jews in the Soviet Union is colonization and land settlement.

The political significance of Jewish colonization in the Soviet Union arises from the possibility of the ultimate formation of a Jewish autonomous republic. It has been conceded by all concerned that the success of the work and the interests of the settlers require that the colonization be conducted on a large scale and concentrated on continuous stretches of land. Such conditions would naturally bring about the creation of a Jewish majority in a definite area. Under the Soviet system and in accordance with the national policy of the Soviet Government such a majority would enjoy autonomous rights.

It is this result which may be looked forward to as an outcome of the Jewish colonization of Bira-Bidjan. The exploration of this district and of a number of others was undertaken by the Comzet to forestall the problems which would arise with the exhaustion of the free lands available for Jewish colonization in the European parts of the Union. The district having been found suitable for colonization on a large scale, it was decided by the Government to reserve it under the jurisdiction of the Comzet for the purpose expressed. The decision was hailed with enthusiasm at hundreds of mass-meetings and conferences in most of the Jewish cities and towns, and more than 3,000 families have expressed their readiness to proceed to the colony.

The difficulties with which the first settlers will have to contend will be many. But with modern American technical methods and facilities the task can be made much easier, and it is the aim of the Ozet, the public organization conducting the work in Bira-Bidjan, to introduce such methods, as far as possible, in the very first stages of colonization. In this the Ozet is being assisted by an American Jewish organization, the Icor, with a membership of about 10,000, which has been active since 1925 in the United States and Canada raising funds for the work of Jewish colonization in Soviet Russia. The Icor has arranged with the Ozet to cooperate in the colonization of Bira-Bidjan by introducing American machinery and such American technical experience as it can enlist in order to facilitate the development of a Jewish autonomous settlement on the banks of the far Amur.

## Contributors to This Issue

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